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JOHN N. PONSARAN

DISCURSIVE AND PEDAGOGICAL (COUNTER)IMPERATIVES IN TEXTBOOK TASKS: A CRITICAL POLITICO-COMMUNICATIVE INQUIRY

Dissertation Adviser:

BENJAMINA PAULA GONZALEZ-FLOR, PhD
Faculty of Information and Communication Studies

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Acceptance Page

This dissertation prepared by JOHN N. PONSARAN titled **Discursive and Pedagogical (Counter)Imperatives in Textbook Tasks: A Critical Politico-Communicative Inquiry** is hereby accepted by the Faculty of Information and Communication Studies, U.P. Open University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Communication (DCOMM).

Benjamina Paula Gonzalez-Flor, PhD **08 June 2022**
Chair, Dissertation Committee

Alexander G. Flor, PhD **08 June 2022**
Member, Dissertation Committee

Serlie Barroga-Jamias, PhD **08 June 2022**
Member, Dissertation Committee

Diego S. Maranan, PhD
Dean
Faculty of Information and Communication Studies

July 20, 2023
Date

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

The researcher hails from the province of Cavite. As an educator in the tertiary level, he handles multidisciplinary courses, namely development theories, poverty studies, Third World studies, Filipino identity and culture, development research, and political economy of health in the Development Studies Program of the University of the Philippines Manila where he also obtained his bachelor's degree from the same academic program and later served as its coordinator. He earned his master's degree of Public Management (MPM) with specialization in local government and regional administration (LGRA) from the UP Open University where he also pursued his professional doctorate in Communication (DComm). Over the years, he became even more convinced of the inherent and mutually reinforcing link of development studies, governance, and applied communication in advancing thoroughgoing change in various levels of engagement and dimensions of analysis in development practice. Correspondingly, this includes the trifocal functions in development education, i.e., teaching, research, and public service. Conscious of the importance of both academic research and popular publication in knowledge-sharing and consciousness-raising, he authored academic papers, feature articles, and opinion columns on Philippine contemporary development issues using the critical perspective as frame of analysis. He is also a two-time recipient of One UP Faculty Grant Award in Development Studies for Outstanding Teaching and Public Service. As an engaged scholar, he strongly advocates for critical media literacy and alternative pedagogy upon which this politico-communicative research is firmly anchored.

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Labis-labis na pagpapahalaga at pasasalamat,

John N. Ponsaran

DEDICATION

Earnestly dedicated

to my loving wife and son – Sheena and Liam

to my caring parents – Arthur and Norma

to my inspiring grandparents – Lolo Tomas and Lola Ester

to my esteemed mentors and teachers in the UP Open University and UP Manila

to my former, current, and future students (and co-learners)

and to the basic sectors in the movement for social change

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ABSTRACT

By employing the discourse of suspicion and critical discourse analysis, textbook tasks were systematically subjected to a process of examination that problematized the text (micro), the discursive practice (meso), and the broader social context (macro). Critical discourse analysis bears significant relevance when adopted as a theoretical and methodological bases in qualitative research considering its "multiplicity of analysis", "plurality of approach", and "multiplicity of conceptions" (Al Maghlouth 2017: 56, 57 & 69).

Consistent with the value-commitment and transformative orientation of the critical tradition and drawing from (1) Mihailidis' civic intentionality, (2) Langran and DeWitt's critical place-based inquiry, and (3) McLaren, Crawford and Freire's critical praxis, this study identified and mapped the discursive and pedagogical counter-imperatives that are embodied and interwoven in the media education textbook tasks. This communication inquiry also went on to analyze these counter-discourses and counter-pedagogies' mutually reinforcing contribution in actualizing the potential of media and information literacy as a socially situated practice of engaged scholarship, communication activism, and social justice education.

Through the discursive and pedagogical examination of the corpus of collated instructional materials, the researcher also sought to generate new and alternative perspectives in reimagining and redesigning media education textbook tasks that will deviate from the orthodox paradigms, processes, and practices.

Key words: critical textbook studies, critical textbook task analysis, text in its dialectical context, discursive counter-imperatives, pedagogical counter-imperatives, discursive strategies, media education approaches, critical media pedagogy, critical media literacy

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

"For most people, literacy has a nonpolitical function. It is there supposedly to help form the intellectual character of a person and to provide paths to upward mobility. Yet, the process of both defining what counts as literacy and how it should be gained has always had links to particular regimes of morality as well." – Michael Apple

Rationale and Background of the Study

(Ir)relevance of Textbooks

This critical research exposition works on the fundamental assumption that textbooks as communication artifacts remain central in many learning conditions and contexts. McKeachie (1999) forwarded that "textbooks are still basic tools for teaching most courses". Sewall (2002) as cited in O'keeffe (2013) went even further pointing out that it is "impossible to achieve a high level of education without the use of textbooks". As an instrument of curricular application, textbook also remains "widely accepted as a common feature of classrooms worldwide" (O'keeffe 2013: 1) such that even when teachers adopt multiple instructional materials, a prescribed textbook still "provides the structure" in the learning process (McKeachie 1999: 144). Arguing that "learning is facilitated by organization", McKeachie (1999) further stressed the importance of textbooks as a general "frame of reference". Even in the contemporary setting, textbooks are still being regarded globally as the "most important educational medium in

classrooms" (Fuchs & Bock 2018: 1). Given the increasingly learner-centered and task-driven trend in contemporary education, textbooks become even more essential by serving as the "major sources of tasks for both classroom activities and homeworks" (Gracin 2018 & Johansson 2006 as cited in Bakken, Jegstad, & Andersson-Bakken 2020). For McKeachie (1999: 144), the centrality of textbook in the learning process cannot be overemphasized. According to him, "textbooks are important part of the teacher's compendium of tools and the newer teaching methods supplement rather than supplant the textbook".

Textbook may also be perceived with ambivalence. Many regard the textbook as the be-all and end-all of learning while, at the other extreme, some dismiss it as outrightly useless. According to Kansas University (n.d.), both mindsets are a "disservice to students". When learning is anchored solely on textbook, especially a defective one at that, student education is short-changed because of the limiting and undesirable experience. However, the failure to appreciate and optimize the potential benefits of this pedagogical device, especially the well-thought-out and well-written ones, may also render student education inadequate and compromised.

Textbook and Its (Dis)content

Broadly speaking, the production, distribution, and adoption of this type of instructional materials cannot be said to operate without the attendant "pervasive and persistent problems" (Limage 2005: 2) that encompass various issues pertaining to usefulness, language use, and logistics. It is within this broader social and administrative context that there is an even greater need for a thoroughgoing inquiry in

textbook development and assessment. Given these academic resources' continuing strong patronage and wide-range adoption, textbooks possess immense politico-communicative potential to function as a viable cultural force (or more appropriately as a countercultural force) in education, media, and the broader development ecology.

Altbach (1991) as cited in Limage (2005: 2) asserted that "the world of textbooks is an unequal world". Limage (2005: 2) further argued that in print-poor regions, textbooks may be the only reading material available to acquire basic literacy. Specifically, she added that this condition is exacerbated by problems related to "(1) materials lacking relevance or quality, (2) learning materials in languages that are unfamiliar to either learners or teachers or both, and (3) corruption or inefficient distribution networks". These social pathologies point to the fact that textbook production and distribution have complex *ethico-communicative* and *politico-administrative* issues that necessitate vigilant attention from critical stakeholders, especially in view of the textbook's critical role in democratic education and cultural change.

Textbooks and (Counter)ideologies

Textbooks are cultural and intellectual records of the past and present societies. As communication artifacts emerging from a particular socio-historical period, textbooks represent and embody not only the accumulated knowledge over the centuries of discovery, innovation, and learning but also the contending dominant and alternative ideological standpoints and discursive traditions of the social forces that influence their production and development. However, despite the textbook's ubiquity and pervasiveness throughout many individuals and institutions' academic existence, this

instructional material remains to be a taken-for-granted and an unproblematized politico-ideological medium in the mainstream social practice. Such is even more the case with respect to the textbook task section.

On one hand, textbooks are cultural materialization of the political and pedagogical values of the academic authors representing a particular *discourse community*. As a strategic politico-ideological instrument, it is virtually inconceivable that the power and intellectual elites would yield their command and control over textbook economics and politics. This long-standing socio-cultural and philosophico-intellectual influence that they wield over textbooks encompasses the various but interanimating stages of production, distribution, consumption, and evaluation.

Alternatively, textbooks may also act as a *countervailing force* to the dominant socio-educational structure if these instructional materials are to be strategically designed, positioned, and employed to question and challenge the orthodoxies in media education, media representation, media ownership, and the broader social ecology where the media, communication, and education systems are situated.

Textbook's (Inherent) Didactic Structure

By and large, textbooks are perceived as authoritative sources of information and knowledge. This frame of mind is brought about by various but interrelated social factors and circumstances. Firstly, textbooks are authored by individuals who are believed to be experts in their respective academic fields. Secondly, textbooks traditionally undergo a rigorous process of editing, vetting, and revision. And lastly, textbooks are prescribed by academic administrators and sometimes even by state officials.

As a pedagogical device, textbooks encompass “teaching, learning and workbooks and a range of tasks and assignments” (Fuchs & Henne 2018: 25). However, it must be realized that “textbook knowledge” is a unique attribute that distinguishes textbooks from other forms of media, and this can be explained by its “didactic structure”, with instruction and learning as the foremost social objectives (Fuchs & Henne 2018: 25).

Textbook as (Surrogate) Curriculum

Textbook is regarded by the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) framework as a '*surrogate curriculum*' in the sense that this instructional material serves as a '*potentially implemented curriculum*', providing a direct link between the '*intended curriculum*' and the '*implemented curriculum*' (Valverde 2002 as cited in O’Keeffe 2013: 4).

UNESCO (2013) defines the 'intended curriculum' as "set of formal documents which specify what the relevant national education authorities and society expect that students will learn at school in terms of knowledge, understanding, skills, values, and attitudes to be acquired and developed, and how the outcomes of the teaching and learning process will be assessed”. Implemented curriculum, according also to UNESCO (2013), is the "actual teaching and learning activities taking place in schools through interaction between learners and teachers as well as among learners, e.g., how the intended curriculum is translated into practice and actually delivered”. The foregoing definitions point to the fact that the design, delivery, and actual encounter with the curriculum is strongly influenced by the subjectivities of education authorities and the varying norms that govern society and, as such, these would significantly differ in terms

of (1) discursive focus, (2) ideological bias, and (3) pedagogical values.

Textbook as *Text* and Textbook Tasks as *(Para)text*

Communication scholars Frey, Botan, and Kreps (2000: 227) distinguished *transcripts of communication* from *outputs of communication* by describing the former as "verbatim recordings of actual communication" (e.g., minutes of an organizational meeting, transcript of a court proceedings) and the latter as "messages produced by communicators themselves, including written artifacts" (e.g., books, diaries, policy documents). Within this parameter, textbooks as communication artifacts can be classified under the “outputs of communication”.

Within the intersection of sociolinguistics and social theory, textbook tasks can be apprehended as embodiments of “category of texts and utterances which share a set of communicative purposes” (Bakken & Andersson-Bakken 2021). Conceived as a *paratext*, Bakken and Andersson-Bakken (2021) define textbook task as communicative act that “performs a directive addressed to the students”. This is consistent with the depiction of task as a proposal to be acted upon and executed by the learners (Littlejohn 2011 as cited in Bakken & Andersson-Bakken 2021). In this sense, the specific directive can be in a form of a *question* or an *instruction*.

Literary theorist Gerard Genette (1997) defines a paratext as a “separate textual element that surrounds the main text”, adding further that it also serves as a “zone not only of *transition* but also of *transaction*” (emphasis mine). Certainly, the textbook task section functions as a paratext because not only does it serves as a transition from discussion to assessment but also a potential platform for action, interaction, and

transaction. As a paratext, textbook task is readily distinguishable from the main text. Generally, these textual elements are “marked with a number, a letter, framing or other visual cues” (Bakken & Andersson-Bakken 2021).

Textbook Task as Site of Struggle(s)

Tasks are crucial in the process of academic training (i.e., functional literacy) as well as political education (i.e., critico-ideological literacy). Students learn and acquire knowledge, skills, and values from “what a task leads them to do” (Doyle 1983 as cited in Bakken & Andersson-Bakken 2021). In the learning process, they imbibe the socio-academic culture into which they are introduced and inducted into by other education stakeholders and, essentially, this discursive and pedagogical experience encompasses the instructional materials that they utilize and the corresponding tasks that they perform and carry out. Within this context, textbooks and the tasks contained therein must be perceived as *value-laden* discursive and pedagogical instruments. As such, textbook tasks cannot be conceived to be divorced from the politico-ideological and socio-educational situatedness of their conception, development as well as potential transformation. However, mainstream curriculum developers and implementers tend to underestimate the potential of textbook tasks in engendering critical pedagogy and social justice education.

Critical media discourse analysis which was adopted for this communication inquiry rests on the fundamental premise that language use is a (1) culturally influenced, (2) historically determined, and, most certainly, (3) a politically contested social practice. Drawing on Stuart Hall (1973), the prevailing power structure that governs the social

relationship between individuals and groups when encoding and decoding texts may appear to be reinforced (i.e., hegemonic), negotiated (i.e., both hegemonic and counter-hegemonic) or interrogated (i.e., counter-hegemonic), depending largely on one's social orientation and ideological position. As such, in this critical communication research, textbook tasks were explored and evaluated as "socially constructed and socially contested cultural and material artifacts" (Zagumny & Richey 2012: 195) that mediate the idea about the social world and the patterns of social relationships that characterize it.

As a learning device, textbook task also offers the students the opportunity to (1) apply knowledge, (2) create new knowledge, and (3) even interrogate prevailing knowledge and values systems, depending on how the authors *alternatively* ask questions, present issues within the task, and require interventions to actual or hypothetical social and sectoral problems.

The Ambivalence (and Contradictions) of Media and Information Literacy

The initial attempt to incorporate what was then media studies was during the 80's among several private educational institutions but limited only to "media literacy and media education" [i.e., not the composite media and information literacy education as we know now] (Alagaran 2013: 268). As a core subject in the senior high school (SHS) level, it was only relatively recent that the composite concept of media and information literacy was officially introduced and offered in the basic education program through the Philippine K-12 curriculum. Thus far, this is the most significant effort in mainstreaming media and information literacy in the Philippine education landscape (Bautista 2021).

However, despite the advances in institutionalizing media and information literacy education, challenges in terms of application and delivery remain. A critical aspect of this policy implementation issue is the "seeming inadequacy in teacher training in MIL and MIL pedagogies" (Bautista 2021: 23). Given the relatively recent encounter with this field of study, Alagaran (2013) also pointed out how MIL is narrowly perceived as the exclusive preserve of educators in the communication field. He added that it is also regarded in other subject areas as a mere strategy to "enliven discussions in the classroom" (Alagaran 2013: 268).

Moreover, it has also been observed that, in general, media literacy education "exists on the margins of formal education" (Mihailidis 2018: 5). In many other countries, the incorporation of media education in the formal curriculum is met with ambivalence. For instance, media education is perceived as "too frivolous" to warrant a creation of a separate subject, yet also viewed as "too academic" to be construed merely as "vocational" (Buckingham 2005 as cited in Kozakowska 2010: 113).

Pedagogical Impetus of '(Re)assessing the Assessment'

Text analysis specialist O'keeffe (2013) pointed out that textbooks possess many viable features and some of these elements tend to be missed out by the textbook authors. The neglectful attitude toward these potentially useful textbook features foregoes the envisioned "significant impact on their target audience" (O'keeffe 2013: 1). In the context of this critical communication inquiry, it can be said that one of the sidetracked features of the instructional material would conceivably be the textbook task and its constitutive elements. Despite its direct association with the main text, this

specialized segment necessitates a separate treatment and a more nuanced examination considering the distinct function of the textbook task as *assessment instrument*.

Textbook Authors as (Counter)hegemons

In the context of instructional materials development, authors act as the *text producers* of media content. Through the texts, authors "encode and communicate ideas about the world" (Weninger 2020: 1). As encoders with their own biases and positionalities, they mediate ideas about the social world to the learners. As such, what the authors seek to ask, instantiate, and assess through the textbook tasks are predicated on what realities about and dimensions of the social world that they want to give attention to and emphasis on. In the same vein, the directives which the authors provide through the textbook tasks also reflect how they envision an actual or a hypothetical social and sectoral problem to be dealt with and given resolution. This system of privileging through agenda setting (i.e., “what to think”), framing (i.e., “how to think”), and priming (i.e., “what standards to set and uphold”) in education can proceed to either one (or both) of these dialectically opposed trajectories, i.e., (1) perpetuation of the hegemonic tradition of hierarchy and exclusion *or* (2) re-orientation to a transformative politics of empowerment and inclusion.

Textbook Task Potentials (and Pitfalls)

As critical component of the teaching-learning praxis, textbook tasks cannot be ignored and put aside in instructional materials evaluation. Imbued with discursive

biases and pedagogical values, textbook tasks are too important to be left unexamined, especially if they are to be viewed and apprehended from the socio-normative lens. This *meta-assessment* (assessment of the assessment tool) is a crucial intervention in the education praxis, particularly along the line of scrutinizing textbook tasks as politico-communicative texts. Worryingly, both uncritical familiarity with and outright neglect of the textbook tasks by some of the education stakeholders render them blinded and oblivious of these assessment instruments' *potentials* and *pitfalls*. Bakken and Andersson-Bakken (2021) cited previous research works that attribute the poorly developed textbook tasks to the failure of the authors and publishers to base the conceptualization according to "any informed, systematic, and well-articulated plan" (Armbruster & Ostertag 1989 as cited in Bakken & Andersson-Bakken 2021). In the same vein, Solihati and Hikmat (2018) as cited also in Bakken and Andersson-Bakken (2021) associated the lack of success of the textbook tasks to elicit critical thinking skills to the "textbook writers' lack of creativity in designing tasks".

(Dys)functions of Media Education

In the study by Bautista (2021: 22), it was revealed that the "lack of preparedness and inadequacy of materials" in Media and Information Literacy during the initial years of its course offering forced some of the teachers to resort to "familiar strategies" (i.e., orthodox pedagogical approaches). In the same research, Bautista (2021: 10) indicated that "there were few books aligned with the Department of Education's curriculum guide" and that "private schools found it difficult to teach the subject because they felt that their books were inadequate".

It was also revealed that Media and Information Literacy teachers had a difficult time conceptualizing and formulating “relevant and appropriate performance task activities” to meet the learning objectives of the Media and Information Literacy curriculum guide (Bautista 2021: 9). In the same study, Bautista (2021: 5) discovered that the selection and choice of educators to teach media and information literacy by the school authorities is mainly in consideration of the curriculum’s *technical* nature (i.e., “text, visual and multimedia”), thereby undermining the *politico-economic* and *socio-cultural* dimensions of the course. This finding points to the pressing need to make the instructional materials strong in media text analysis, critical inquiry, and socio-civic application. The subsequent revisions and editions, therefore, necessitate a critical examination of these instructional materials not only in the technico-functional dimension but also in the politico-communicative facet as well. This must include a separate and thorough evaluation of the textbook task component in view of its strong influence to the learning delivery and assessment modalities of the neophyte classroom teachers of this recently established subject area.

(De)atomization of Society

The culture of individualism being *fostered* and *foisted* by ultra-consumerist media led to an even greater extent of ‘atomization of society’. This social phenomenon is characterized by the *ersatz* form of connectedness engendered by the *fleeting* and *fragile* technologically mediated social relationships. Media and information literacy education, therefore, must be strategically reconfigured to avoid perpetuating the same tendency in student learning and should instead aim to reverse this dysfunctional

pattern through the adoption of critical, relational, and other-oriented (i.e., *kapwa*-oriented) pedagogical modalities and task designs. Within this parameter, the role of well-conceptualized textbooks in the concretization of this objective is paramount and indispensable. In a critical discursive analysis by Gonsalvez (2013) on citizenship education, she argued how the neoliberal discourse has penetrated and influenced the state, the civil society as well as the educational system, leading to academic policies, curricula, and pedagogies becoming flawed and compromised. In her study, it was revealed that the learners were deprived of sufficient opportunities to be transformed into "reflective, engaged and empowered citizens with the capacity to shape society and challenge institutionalized oppressions such as racism, poverty, sexism, ageism, and classism" (Gonsalvez 2013). Adopting the action-driven attribute of critical discourse analysis, Gonsalvez presented a *counter-curriculum* based on "moral, ethical and democratic" considerations. In this study, Gonsalvez complementarily employed documentary method, critical discourse analysis, and critical theory as research strategies in problematizing and transforming citizenship education. As embodied curricula, the textbooks and the prescribed tasks contained therein can, in fact, also alternatively function as counter-curricula to the mainstream paradigm and practice in media and information literacy education. Anti-oppressive education advocate Connie North (2009: 130) forwarded that the praxis of *democratic literacy* requires a "thriving public square" which will serve as the political avenue where the people can congregate to discuss, deliberate, and debate on common and diverse sectoral issues and concerns. North (2009: 130) added that whether "place-based or virtual", this platform will not materialize if students do not internalize democratic values and develop

democratic literacy. In the same vein, this will not be engendered and embodied in the instructional materials if a rights-based and inclusive academic culture is not the norm in the media and information literacy course in particular and in the existing educational curriculum in general. Along this line, Krishna Kumar (2000: 322) pointed out that "education is a good door to the future" but she also argued further that its outcome "depends on many things we may never teach in schools", i.e., ideas and insights drawn from the learners' "socialization from the wider milieu". Both the contentions of North (2009) and Kumar (2000), therefore, underscore the fundamental importance of *public sphere pedagogy* in making media and information literacy a platform for *critique, re-imagination,* and *transformation*.

(Re)contextualizing and (Re)localizing Media Literacy Education

Len Masterman's (1989) elucidation that "media education is a lifelong process" and that this goal requires "high student motivation" resonates well with his equally compelling argument about the aim of media education to "illuminate the *life-situations* of learners". This perceptive reminder points to the importance of taking into serious account the students' social situatedness (i.e., lived experiences and living encounters) in (re)configuring the educational design and outcome. Such exposition by Masterman is anchored on the basic premise that the level and quality of student involvement and engagement is strongly correlated with the alignment of the curricular device to the social realities that *surround* and *confront* them in their immediate local communities. In relation to instructional materials development, Montagnes (2000) as cited in Limage (2005: 12) conceived enlightened publishing as the social practice of fulfilling the "local

need" and reflecting the "local conditions and realities". Along this line, the strategic objective to appropriately contextualize media and information literacy only becomes practicable when pursued through a *place-conscious, culturally sensitive,* and *community-rooted pedagogy*.

(Re)thinking Textbook Task Design

Media and information literacy education needs to be re-imagined as "intentionally civic" (Mihailidis 2018: 1) and, within the context of this critical qualitative research, such community-oriented mission becomes viable by adhering to a textbook task design with a critical, cultural, and context-conscious attributes. Consistent with the *discourse of suspicion* (Mumby 1997), critical place-based inquiry is a reaction to the dominant discursive and pedagogical frames that *de-territorialize* and *alienate* learners from their social contexts and local communities. In both manifest and latent ways, conventional education promotes *ivory tower* (detached and decontextualized), *individualist* (atomized), and *western-oriented* (neocolonial) standards and practices, and this extends to the manner by which mainstream textbook authors in various disciplines design assessments, i.e., frame questions, conceptualize activities, instantiate problems and issues, and interpose courses of actions and interventions in the textbook tasks.

As an embodiment of the curriculum, the textbook through its learning activities and performance tasks can potentially link the students to the local communities as well as connect the explicit knowledge (or institutionalized knowledge) coded in the academic disciplines *with* the tacit knowledge (i.e., indigenous knowledge) embedded in the local ecologies and cultures. This potential interweaving of knowledge systems will develop

cultural competence, foster intercultural dialogue, and bring about cultural development through/in media education.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

According to critical scholar Michael Apple (2000), textbook is a "site of struggle" and as an extension of the state-rendered curriculum it cannot be claimed to be a "neutral form of knowledge". He also pointed out that textbook as a cultural artifact "legitimizes selective form of knowledge and culture". Correspondingly, this also applies in apprehending textbook tasks and learning activities. Apple (2000) further argued that scant attention is being paid to the textbook despite its "defining role whose culture is taught". An even lesser recognition is being accorded to textbook task as an integral component of this instructional material, especially in the context of surfacing and interrogating its politico-ideological and socio-pedagogical embodiments and expressions. The focus of the existing studies that dealt with textbook tasks is limited to the pedagogical dimension viewed only from the *positivist* and *functionalist lenses*. There are none thus far that examines textbook tasks from the alternative critico-pedagogical perspectives. Moreover, the common subject areas of inquiry are mainly about Science (Bakken & Andersson-Bakken 2021; Andersson-Bakken, Jegstad & Bakken 2020), Math (O'keeffe 2013), and Languages (Bakken & Andersson-Bakken 2021; Humphries, Miyakoshi, & Miyoshi 2014), among others, with very limited coverage on media and information literacy education.

Additionally, there is a more pressing need now to critically examine the overall

quality and attribute of educational materials in view of the valid issues being raised by textbook crusaders as well as the vigilant public about the glaring conceptual errors and gender insensitive contents that were discovered in various instructional materials across subject areas.

There has been an increasing interest in studying textbooks as political and communication artifacts (Limage 2005, Hickman & Porfilio 2012, Fuchs & Bock 2018); however, there is only a very limited attention being accorded to the systematic analysis of textbook tasks and none thus far using critical discourse analysis. Research employing critical discourse analysis within the last decade or so cover English teaching (Alford 2015), English language composition (Orr 2007), citizenship education (Gonsalvez 2013), media education (Kozakowska 2010), Saudi English-language blogs (Al Maghlouth 2017), presidential campaign speeches (Post 2009), newspaper commentaries on terrorism (Wang 2006), melodramatic films (Santiago 2007), social construction of disability identities (Sujit-apa 2017), and place-based identities (Wiehe 2013), among others. Textbook task as *paratext* is seldom given proper attention in the analysis and evaluation of academic materials despite its crucial role in enhancing and enriching the learning experience as well as in contributing to the deepening and sharpening of the students' community consciousness, democratic commitment, and social justice orientation (i.e., engaged scholarship and communication activism).

This study, therefore, sought to fill in a *research gap in focus* and *in analysis* by attempting to surface and examine the counter-discourses and counter-pedagogies that are encoded and imbedded in the Media and Information Literacy textbook tasks as instructional devices. By analyzing the counter-discourses and counter-pedagogies,

this study was able to reveal and explicate the positionalities and intentionalities (i.e., meaning behind the action) from which the textbook authors base their articulations as expressed (coherently or otherwise) in the textbook tasks.

Throughout recorded history, textbooks served the political objective of controlling and regulating the kind of information and knowledge that are circulated around and passed down from one generation to the next. In the same vein (and more ostensibly), the textbook task section also reflects and influences what knowledge (or knowledge system) will be privileged and what new knowledge forms will be potentially generated. A monolithic system of knowledge production restricts the content and coverage of the textbook tasks to the parameters dictated and sanctioned by the prevailing order. As a value-laden instrument, textbook task frames and prescribes through the way it includes or excludes, emphasizes or de-emphasizes, and promotes or undermines a particular perspective, precept, and/or pedagogy. This, therefore, points to the political and moral necessity to subject textbook tasks to thoroughgoing examination that will reveal the underlying discursive and pedagogical (counter)imperatives, the discursive strategies, and media education approaches of the academic authors.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the *unknowns* identified in the problem statement, the following general and specific research questions were formulated:

General

What discursive and pedagogical (counter)imperatives are espoused and expounded by the academic authors in the Media and Information Literacy textbook tasks?

Specific

1. What social and sectoral issues are covered in the textbook tasks and how are these selected development issues mediated and instantiated for analysis and intervention?

2. How do the authors ideologically and communicatively position the learners through the social roles that they are required to perform in the textbook tasks?

3. How do the complex and dialectical relationships between the textbook tasks (as text), the textbook task rendering (as discursive practice) and the broader development arrangement (as social context) shape and influence the discursive and pedagogical (counter)imperatives in the textbook tasks?

a. What are the discursive strategies employed by the academic authors in developing and rendering the textbook tasks?

b. What is the broader social context where the textbook authors as media

producers and the textbook tasks as socio-academic texts are situated and predicated?

4. What elements and/or constructs of civic intentionality, critical place-based inquiry, and critical praxis are observable in the discursive and pedagogical (counter)imperatives of the textbook tasks and how do they mutually reinforce each other in contributing to the actualization of the potential of media and information literacy as a socially situated practice of engaged scholarship, communication activism, and social justice education?

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

As a value-oriented device and a "zone of transaction" (Genette 1997), the textbook task section is a strategic academic resource employed by media educators to *facilitate, induce, concretize, activate,* and *extend* learning. Overtly or covertly, this instructional instrument also introduces, represents, and communicates various *social* and *sociological* themes through a diverse set of complementing as well as contrasting discourses and pedagogies. However, this qualitative inquiry deliberately centered on the co-orienting critical discourses and pedagogies and how such *critical synergy* contributes to the objective of advancing reflective, dialectical, and transformative education.

This politico-communicative inquiry works on the main premise that given the inherent contradictions within and between the academe, the media sector, and the

other social forces in the broader development community, media scholars and educators acting as concurrent members of these sectoral groups tend to manifest subjectivities through the clashing discursive and pedagogical imperatives and counter-imperatives that they adopt, espouse, and practice.

Taking into serious consideration the contexts, complexities, and interconnectedness of these fundamental realities, critical discourse analysis was adopted as the appropriate framework and methodology for this social inquiry. In relation to the foregoing research questions, the following specific research objectives are put forth, with this overarching general objective as anchor: Identify and examine the discursive and pedagogical (counter)imperatives that are espoused and expounded by the academic authors in the Media and Information Literacy textbook tasks.

1. Identify the social and sectoral issues that are covered in the textbook tasks and examine in what ways these selected development issues are mediated and instantiated for analysis and intervention.

2. Identify and examine how the learners are ideologically and communicatively positioned through the social roles that they are assigned to perform in the textbook tasks.

3. Analyze how the complex and dialectical relationships between the textbook tasks (text), the textbook task rendering (discursive practice), and the broader structural condition (social context) shape and influence the discursive and pedagogical imperatives and (counter)imperatives in the textbook tasks.

Identify and analyze the discursive strategies employed by the academic authors in developing and rendering the textbook tasks. Analyze the broader social context where the textbook authors as media producers and the textbook tasks as socio-academic texts are situated and predicated.

4. Identify the observable elements and/or constructs of civic intentionality, critical place-based inquiry, and critical praxis in the discursive and pedagogical counter-imperatives of the textbook tasks and analyze their mutually reinforcing contribution in actualizing the potential of media and information literacy as a socially situated practice of engaged scholarship, communication activism, and social justice education.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

As a capstone requirement in a professional doctorate degree in the field of Communication that is consistent with the academic institution's strong development orientation, this qualitative textbook inquiry aimed to humbly contribute to media education praxis with the various key stakeholders in the broad development community in mind.

Media and Information Literacy Students

This textbook task discourse analysis sought to mainstream critical media pedagogies in basic education and fulfill MIL's role in achieving a fully functioning

(i.e., *not fictional*) democracy. As primary stakeholders in media and information literacy education, students stand to benefit from this critical textbook research by improving their learning experiences and outcomes through the enhancement of textbook task design in terms of criticality, creativity, and community viability.
By incorporating civic intentionality, critical place-based pedagogy, and critical praxis, learning media and information literacy then becomes a reflective, integrative, values-based, community-rooted, collective, and action-driven encounter for the students and the other critical stakeholders in the media and education sectors.

Media and Information Literacy Textbook Writers

This communication inquiry seeks to influence the pioneer, novice as well as prospective Media and Information Literacy textbook writers and educators to mainstream counter-discourses and develop counter-pedagogies that possess the *trifocal meta-attributes* of being *civic intentioned, place-oriented*, and *critical*. When employed as a guide in writing textbooks and designing assessments, the findings and analyses of this critical textbook research will contribute in developing academic authors and media educators into becoming *self-reflective practitioners* who are capable of interrogating long-standing dogmas and doctrines in media, education, and culture.

School Authorities and MIL Teachers

The increasing trend within the education sector towards learner-centered and learning-centered pedagogies necessitates longer time allotment for prescribed tasks that promote active student involvement and hence lesser duration of the conventional

lectures and other teacher-centric instructional strategies. The emphasis given by the K-12 curriculum on student-centered instruction requires the textbook writers to develop learning modalities and activities that will fulfill this pressing pedagogical need. This, therefore, needs a *broader* and *better* selection of textbook tasks that are not only conceptually sound but are also self-reflective, socially relevant, critical, community-oriented, and, most certainly, collaborative.

Local Communities

Well-designed textbook task section can serve as an effective springboard of campus and community alignment and engagement, especially on matters of mutual interests such as democratic literacy, participatory governance, ecological sustainability, public health, community safety, and cultural heritage promotion, among others. The community-oriented media and information literacy textbook task design holds a huge potential in creating a synergy (*sanib-lakas*) of institutionalized/explicit and localized/tacit knowledge towards the enhancement of contextualized student learning and the formulation of sustainable solutions to long-standing as well as emerging community problems. This opportunity for knowledge co-production builds trust and confidence (i.e., social capital) between the schools and the communities, which is especially instrumental in tackling multisectoral and multidimensional development issues and challenges.

Regulatory Agencies

A thorough and critical review of the present Media and Information Literacy

textbooks is a *policy imperative* considering that this set is among the preliminary batch (i.e., first and second editions) of published instructional materials since the course was first offered under the country's K-12 basic education curriculum. This review will help in improving the future editions of the existing set of textbooks as well as in guiding the production of the subsequent set of new published titles. Ultimately, this qualitative inquiry aims to play a humble part in academic policy development, publication excellence, and assessment reform in the Philippine education sector by advocating for a community-oriented, place-based, and praxis-driven instruction in media and information literacy education.

The analysis and recommendation that emerged from this critical communication research may also be potentially adopted in the reconceptualization and reformulation of textbook task design in other subject areas, year levels, and local contexts.

SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The corpus of texts covered by this qualitative communication inquiry is the set of commercially available Media and Information Literacy textbooks that are compliant with the existing Philippine K-12 Senior High School curriculum. This choice of instructional materials for critical discourse analysis allowed the researcher to cover a *diverse but comparable* textbook selection from various local academic publishing firms and those which are produced by Filipino authors (i.e., privately commissioned educators and writers from a range of disciplines and fields). As a constitutive element of the cultural and creative industry, the decision to focus on the commercially available instructional

materials afforded this current research to situate and examine the textbook tasks contained therein within the particular context of the prevailing market-oriented socio-economic order.

The firm resolve to focus this critical review on textbook tasks is based on the following interconnected circumstances and presuppositions: (1) action-orientation of textbook tasks, (2) limited attention and appreciation accorded to textbook task as a *genre* (Bakken & Andersson-Bakken 2021), (3) potential of textbook tasks to link the private and the public spheres and facilitate the change agenda, (4) politico-communicative nature of the discursive and pedagogical counter-imperatives advanced by the authors through the textbook tasks, (5) this researcher's deep interest in creative, critical and community-oriented counter-pedagogies, and (6) the intersection of communication, curriculum, and community as substantive areas in the praxis of critical media pedagogy.

This communication inquiry on *message* and *context*, however, will not cover the reception and perception of the teachers and students based on their actual use of the instructional materials (i.e., the assigning and carrying out of the prescribed textbook tasks). This limitation serves as an opportunity for future studies which this same researcher or other communication scholars can pursue eventually. By focusing on the message, the research was able to critically examine and analyze the textbook tasks' explicit and implicit content which served as the fundamental basis of the critical textual, process, and contextual analyses.

This critical textbook research is based on the basic assumption that texts communicate deeply embedded messages and meanings about media, education, and

society. In this communication phenomenon, the textbook task instructions serve as the *medium of the main message* and given the didactic structure and ideological nature of textbooks, this renders the communicative act of conceptualizing and constructing textbook task as *purposive, discursive,* and hence *politico-normative*.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Critical Digital Literacy

Critical digital literacy involves the perceptive use of digital communication and media technologies and being fully aware of the potential information disorders and social pathologies that they can bring about when misused and abused as well as the prospective empowering and emancipatory transformation that they engender when employed responsibly, ethically, and democratically.

Critical Media Literacy

Critical media literacy pertains to the perceptive understanding of and engagement with media within the specific politico-economic context of its creation, circulation, and consumption. It also refers to the critical apprehension of media text, media ideology, media system, media governance, and media ethics as well as the critical acquisition of complementary values and skills needed to become a responsible and ethical media producer and consumer.

Critical Media Pedagogy

Critical media pedagogy is an alternative approach in media literacy education which inculcates critical thinking skills to learners through the (1) perceptive evaluation of media information and its sources, (2) analytical exposition of the power relations between social groups, and (3) *coherent application* and *critical harmonization* of discursive and pedagogical counter-imperatives.

Critical Place-Based Approach

Critical place-based approach is an alternative pedagogical framework that allows the students to acquire critical awareness of their own as well as others' complex ecologies and contexts in the distinct but interconnected physico-geographic, politico-economic, socio-cultural, and philosophico-intellectual dimensions. By employing critical place-based learning, students will be able to make relevant interconnections of the dialectical (1) human, non-human, and more-than-human, (2) material and non-material, (3) economic and non-economic, (4) social and technological as well as the (5) local and global elements in their physical, natural and social environments, especially those involving intense power contestations and conflicts over strategic resources and claim rights.

Discourse(s)

Discourse possesses the potential to produce, reproduce as well as challenge

existing power relations and social order. Within the parameter of this research, discourse is embodied in the concepts, precepts, and strategies being employed and deployed by academic authors as media producers in designing and formulating textbook tasks. In the words of Janks (1997: 12), discourse provides people (and the discourse communities they represent) with "subject positions from which to speak and read the world" as well as transform it. To illustrate the discourse's "social constitutiveness", Al Maghlouth (2017: 39) forwarded that "*discourse is socially constitutive of, as well as constituted by, society*", thereby reaffirming the potential of discourse to create and be created.

Discursive Counter-imperatives

In this critical communication inquiry, the focal points of analysis are the counter-discourses (as well as counter-pedagogies) in media, education and development that were embodied and interwoven in the textbook tasks as socio-academic texts. Discursive counter-imperatives are the *discursive countercurrents* about media, education, and society that must *coherently* inform and influence the conceptualization and formulation of the *substantive dimension* of textbook tasks and that must *alternatively* guide the students in representing and making sense of social realities.

Pedagogical Counter-imperatives

Correspondingly, pedagogical counter-imperatives pertain to what can be posited as alternative learning interventions and initiatives needed in carrying out the materialization of the discursive counter-imperatives in the textbook task section.

These also refer to the pedagogical values and strategies (praxis) that are necessary in critically approaching and acting upon the substantive dimensions and subjective representations of social and sectoral issues that are instantiated in the textbook tasks.

Pedagogical Values

This communication research adopted the definition of pedagogical values by instructional design scholar and practitioner Sophia Palahicky (2017), to wit:

> *Pedagogical values refer to the worldviews, beliefs, perspectives, and biases about teaching and learning that underpin our specific educational practices.*

The Royal Roads University provided an elaboration of the concept, situating it in the specific context of designing teaching and learning, to quote:

> *They are the belief systems that inform the decisions that we make at the micro and macro level of our teaching, from how we design learning experiences to how we interact and engage with learners.*

Chapter II

LITERATURE REVIEW

"In all affairs, it's a healthy thing now and then to hang a question mark on the things you have long taken for granted." – Bertrand Russel

Problematizing Criticality and Criticism

In undertaking critical discourse analysis, it is crucial to begin the task by apprehending that the term '*critical*' emerged from the Greek word '*krinein*' which means "to separate", "to discern", "to judge" or "to choose", strongly implying about the need to pursue a "conscious, deliberate inquiry" and to take "a skeptical state of mind" (Barnet & Bedau 2011: 3). To be critical, therefore, demands informed decision-making and active position-taking, especially on complex and contentious development and policy issues.

As a basic premise, Wallace (2003) as cited in Kozakowska (2010: 117) maintained that in CDA-oriented inquiry the use of the operative word "criticism" is predicated on its "stronger, politically committed sense" and *not* in its weaker interpretation that merely centers on logical argumentation, style consistency, and message clarity. As such, critical textbook analysis requires the adoption of a politico-normative type of criticism that is up to the task of (1) exposing hidden power asymmetries, (2) opposing oppressive social structures, and (3) proposing an alternative media and pedagogical order.

Unmasking Economic and Social Forces

Cultural critic Raymond Williams (1962) in his article "The Existing Alternatives in Communication" pointed out that textbook production and selling are not determined by 'society' but instead by the 'market', such that only "the profitable will survive, especially if it is quickly profitable". Borman (2011: 117) in his discussion about the 'structural sociology of the school' underscored that the interests being served by the socialization that takes place in school as a social institution are those of the ruling class and not that of the society-at-large. Invoking Bourdieu, this study subscribes to his argument as advanced by Borman (2011: 117) that the "stratifying structures of the school serve to confirm, reinforce, and legitimize the superiority of those who possess cultural capital". Both Williams (1962) and Borman (2011) emphasized how the welfare of the broader section of the society always gets compromised in favor of the deeply entrenched powerful few. As an embodied curriculum and a potential countercultural force, the role of textbooks as well as the learning and performance tasks contained therein are critical in transforming the school as viable and change-oriented community partner in the process of achieving critical learning, other-awareness, and place-based justice.

Advancing Multiple Competencies and Literacies

Educator and anti-oppression advocate Connie North (2009) in her book "Teaching for Social Justice: Voices from the Front Lines" explored how "functional, critical, relational, democratic, and visionary literacies" can be strategically employed to teach and instill social justice praxis among the students. For North (2009), these 'multiple literacies' are requisite competencies essential "to excel at schooling and to effect

positive change at the local and more global levels". Each competency brings about immense possibilities, i.e., (1) gain "access to academic opportunities" (functional), (2) "confront unjust elements in the status quo" (critical), (3) "meet human beings' fundamental need to be cared for" (relational), (4) "promote mutual understanding and informed decision-making on issues impacting the common good" (democratic), and (5) "engender and sustain students' and teachers' commitment to engage the world as agents of change" (visionary) [North 2009; Gutstein 2002 & Stoval 2006 as cited in North 2009]. The complementary roles of these multiple literacies serve well when applied and activated in media education. Accordingly, instructional materials in media and information literacy education must not only perform the purpose of improving the aptitude level of learners (i.e., functional literacy) but, more crucially, serve as empowering platforms to engender ethics of care (i.e., relational literacy), consciousness-raising (i.e., critical literacy), inclusive decision-making (i.e., democratic literacy), and thoroughgoing change (i.e., visionary literacy).

Expanding Freedom through Media and Education

Communication scholar Denis McQuail (2013: 42) in his book "Journalism and Society" outlined the contributions of media to the public sphere, namely:
"(1) maintaining space for public debate, (2) circulating ideas, (3) extending freedom, (4) connecting citizens with governments, (5) giving opportunities to voices of organized civil society to speak, and (6) mobilization towards civic engagement". These roles of media in the public sphere are also the cornerstones of the alternative discourses of Wulff (1997) as well as Kellner and Share (2007) on media literacy education and

critical media literacy, respectively. Wulff (1997: 136) emphasized that media literacy education must focus on the interrelated abilities of "proficient use, effective creation, and critical interpretation", arguing further that this set of communication skills is crucial in the "active, responsible participation, and interaction in contemporary society".

As scholar-advocates themselves, Kellner and Share (2007: 17) straightforwardly associated critical media literacy with the tradition of *radical democracy* with both aiming to enhance "democratization and civic participation" and to employ media as "instruments of social communication and change". Kellner and Share (2007) also reiterated their call that there should be *no* debate anymore regarding the pedagogical urgency to teach critical media literacy because at this crucial stage the focus must already be on the need to discover and develop effective strategies and techniques in applying and activating it. This current communication research believes that critical media literacy strategies and techniques *must be* and *can be* coherently embodied and enacted in the textbook tasks. Consistent with McQuail's (2013) assertion about the contribution of media to the public sphere, textbooks through the prescribed academic tasks and learning activities must be strategically employed in facilitating dialogue and debate as well as in fostering participatory democracy and people-centered development, and, as such, should not be another mainstream art and design course.

Engendering Critical Autonomy and Critical Solidarity

Kellner and Share (2007: 18) also forwarded that by integrating "critical autonomy with critical solidarity" in teaching media literacy, students become "independent and interdependent critical thinkers". Through this *critical integration*, learners are expected

to develop the necessary set of knowledge, skills, and values to interrogate the dominant media, education, and development paradigms, policies, and practices. An application of this critical pedagogical tenet is sustained collaboration with their co-learners in school and in the community through the adoption of "committed research" (Villegas 1999) and participatory media production (Campos 2016). By incorporating critical autonomy and critical solidarity in media literacy education, students will also learn to thoughtfully evaluate media texts, deeply imbibe the culture of engaged scholarship, and collaboratively tackle complex social and sectoral problems – both recurring and emerging ones.

Internalizing the Pedagogy of Solidarity

Historian Glen Kuecker (2009: 48) advanced the notion that *solidarity* has an inherent connection with *pedagogy* and, relatedly, the idea of *process* in solidarity work as well as in pedagogical praxis is foundational and indispensable. *Process,* therefore, is conceived to be a "method of solidarity" within the particular context of school-community engagement and in the "give-and-take of lived experiences" (Kuecker 2009: 49). Drawing from education activist Henry Giroux, Kuecker (2009: 49) pointed out that essentially "solidarity is a process of crossing borders" and this involves critically apprehending various groups' social situatedness and sectoral differences. For instance, a student cannot effectively foster solidarity in advocating for agrarian reform if he/she does not "cross border" to profoundly understand the lives and struggles of the peasant class. Along this line, Henry Giroux (1991 as cited in Kuecker 2009:49) came up with the discourse of "border pedagogy" to underscore the

importance of *diversity* and *difference* as elements of a “common struggle to extend the quality of public life”. Foregrounding politics and dialectics, Giroux (1991) argued further that “the category of border demonstrates in the metaphorical and literal sense how power is inscribed differently on the body, culture, history, space, land, and psyche”. When enacting and carrying out textbook tasks, this process of ‘border crossing’ (Giroux 1991) is fundamental in facilitating a dynamic and dialogic school-community interaction and exchange. In this regard, textbook authors must creatively and critically be able to conceive performance tasks whereby students will experience ‘border crossing’ and learn from the community’s wealth of wisdom and diversity of experience. In relation to ‘border crossing’, critical place-based inquiry will allow the media and information literacy students and the community to “read the world”, “understand how place matters”, “leverage technology”, and “tell the stories from multiple perspectives” (Langran & DeWitt 2020).

Creating Preferred Futures through Place-Based Pedagogy

In their research which centered on design and technology as a learning area, scholars Best, Macgregor, and Price (2017: 91) concluded that adopting place-based approach led to a deeper understanding and commitment to education’s social mission of “supporting individuals and communities to create preferred futures”. The realization of this socio-pedagogical goal is dependent on individuals and institutions’ “enhanced sense of civic responsibility” and a profound valuing of “communities and citizens at a local level” (Best et al. 2017).

Relatedly, in a qualitative study of educators’ discourses on racialized spaces and

critical place-based identities, Wiehe (2013) examined how the meaning-making of race came about from the interplay of "schooling, culture, bodies and work that are spatialized". Based on this critical exploration, it was revealed that the "discourses of place" can also alternatively bring about "politics of decolonization and re-inhabitation" (Gruenewald 2003 as cited in Wiehe 2013), thereby allowing a counter-pedagogy that envisions and creates preferred futures for the minority students and their local communities. The collective social mission of creating "preferred futures" is consistent with the notions of *personal efficacy* (i.e., individual) and *collective agency* (i.e., community) as well as the ideals of advocating for *independence* and *interdependence* through "critical autonomy and critical solidarity" (Kellner & Share 2007).

Conscious of the drawbacks of decontextualized education, it is unfortunate how instructional materials have become *depoliticized* and hence emasculated of their cultural rootedness and transformative potential. According to social critics, textbooks in general do not possess the ideal localized orientation because profit maximizing publishing firms aim to make their products more marketable by rendering the content and context as broad and generic as possible (Hadley 2013 as cited in Humphries, Miyakoshi & Miyoshi 2014: 44). In this case, the end-users (i.e., teachers and students) will have to make do with the generalized and contextless approach of the textbooks and, by extension, the constitutive textbook learning and performance tasks.

Concretizing Curriculum through Textbooks

The inclusion of media and information literacy as a required subject in the curricula

across many countries worldwide is an affirmation of its increasing strategic importance in public sphere education and communication for social change. However, the creation and institutionalization of a specialized course in media and information literacy that centers on the development of a composite set of skills (i.e., media, information, technological, and digital literacies, among others) is only a *necessary* but *not* a *sufficient condition* in fulfilling the curricular objective of enabling students to become accountable and ethical producers, users, and interpreters of media information. The challenge to *up the ante* is even more pressing, especially in today's era of 'information obesity' (Whitworth 2009), 'networked disinformation' (Ong & Cabañes 2018), and 'disinformation innovation' (Ong 2020). For this goal to become a socio-pedagogical reality, there is a compelling need to consciously align the course along the *politico-critical path.* Towards this end, the role of instructional materials such as textbooks is crucial in achieving the political and pedagogical objectives of developing reflective, creative, and critical thinking among the learners. In more specific terms, according to Valverde (2002) as cited in O'keeffe (2013: 2), "textbooks translate the abstractions of curriculum policy into operations that teachers and students can carry out." When viewed from this theoretico-practical perspective, the portion of the textbook that both teachers and students can "carry out" are embodied in the specific questions, instructions, mediations, instantiations, and interpositions contained and enshrined in the textbook task section.

Interpreting Textbooks as Social Text

Unpacking textbook using critical discourse analysis enables communication,

media, and education researchers to identify and explore the "narrative modes and latent interpretive patterns of the socio-cultural knowledge it contains" (Hohne 2003 as cited in Fuchs & Henne 2018: 26). Apart from examining "what is and what is not recounted in the textbook", critical discourse analysis also explores what "narrative strategies" as well as discursive strategies are employed to present, mediate, and disseminate the content to the readers (Handro & Schonemann 2010 as cited in Fuchs & Henne 2018: 26). Situating these points of contention in relation to the focus of this current research, the discursive and pedagogical (counter)imperatives were critically identified and analyzed based on how they were methodically employed in the textbook tasks and learning activities. This enabled the researcher to reveal the authors' orientation or in Trachtenberg's (1974) words "the intent of the communicator".

"Reading with" and "Reading against" the Text

The employment of discursive and pedagogical strategies differs considerably across individuals and groups depending on their respective *subject positions*. According to critical literacy specialist Hilary Janks (1997), it can either assume as *engaged* (i.e., "reading with") or *estranged* (i.e., "reading against") position. When one is coming from a subject position that adopts an alternative standpoint (i.e., discourse of suspicion), the reading then assumes the latter, i.e., an oppositional frame. In some instances, the authors' positionality may not appear as readily apparent, especially when the discursive presentation is rendered as "normal" and "natural". This tendency is more pronounced in the realm of formal education and instruction, more particularly in dealing with official texts and documents such as the mainstream curricula, textbooks,

and assessment tools. Janks (1997: 2) associates this hegemonic reading position with the *assimilationist model of literacy* wherein "readers are expected to identify with the textual positionings". The default formal and didactic nature of textbooks tends to normalize such lopsided power relations in the act of reading as a social practice.

According to Grice (1975) and Smith (1971) as cited in Janks (1997), readers tend to engage with the text to understand and make sense of the material and the message. Correspondingly, Scholes (1985) as cited in Janks (1997) maintained that writers instinctively produce text in such a manner that it will restrict alternative interpretations and thereby control their readers' sense-making and meaning-making patterns. In the context of teaching, Freebody, Luke and Gilbert (1991) as cited also in Janks (1997) argued that educators tend to favor dominant reading positions to make the students get acquainted only with the prevailing interpretations. Janks (1997: 3) summarized the foregoing factors as "co-operation, text power, and institutional practice". In the educational setting, Bonvillain (2008: 396) refers to these factors as "institutionally-derived rights" possessed by entrenched individuals and groups to assert their social, ideological, and intellectual ascendancy. The temptation to get swayed by the "text's apparent naturalness" (Janks 1997: 3) away from the oppositional standpoint must therefore be exposed and interrogated.

Legitimizing Discourse

Discourse analyst Theo van Leeuwen (2007: 91) maintained that discourses in public communication is legitimized by invoking "authority of tradition, custom and law" ('authorization'), "discourses of values" ('moral evaluation'), "goals and uses of

institutionalized action ('rationalization'), and "narratives whose outcomes reward legitimate actions and punish non-legitimate action" ('storytelling'). Looking at these four categories within the context of textbook use in general, we can observe how they all apply and get consistently enacted. To illustrate, textbooks by and large have been traditionally and consistently (1) employed and incorporated in the teaching-learning practice ('authorization'), (2) sanctioned by the school authorities for official and widespread adoption ('authorization'), (3) perceived to be imbued with ethico-moral biases and pedagogical values ('moral evaluation'), (4) governed by institutionally-derived policies and norms in their production, dissemination, adoption, and use, ('rationalization'), and, lastly, (4) reinforced (or undermined) by narratives that recognize (or criticize) the social/discursive practice in question ('storytelling'). Legitimization, therefore, is socio-historically and socio-politically situated and, as underscored by van Leeuwen (2007: 92), a "decontextualized study of legitimation is not possible" as it constantly involves the "legitimation of the practices of specific institutional orders". Within the parameter of this social inquiry, the institutional orders would constitute the contending social environments, forces and arrangements in the education, media, and development realms.

Changing Genre Norms

In a dialectical pattern, norms emerge, get challenged, and evolve. In the context of textbook task conceptualization and formulation, the choice of what values and whose voice to privilege will determine (1) how the learning assessment will take shape (e.g., assessment for learning, assessment as learning, and assessment of learning),

(2) which dimension (e.g., political, cultural, communicational, etc.) and level of analysis (e.g., individual, family, organizational, community, national, regional, global) will be accorded higher premium, and (3) what discursive strategies and media education approaches to employ. In analyzing *genre norms*, Berge (1990) as cited in Bakken and Andersson-Bakken (2021) proposed a typology that explains how norms go through this process of transformation. The first is *norm declaration* which is enacted by an authoritative member of the discourse community and is also the mechanism by which deviation from the established norm is regulated or sanctioned. The second is *norm incorporation* which pertains to the "drift in norms" that takes place when new members are introduced to the long-standing norms and when tensions inevitably emerge from this stage of initial engagement. The third is *functional norm constitution* which takes place when the discourse community realizes that the existing norm is no longer serving its social mission and when there is an increasing group consensus to develop a new one. The last is the *revolutionary norm constitution* where an individual from the discourse community challenges the dominant norm, develops a counter-norm, and is successfully able to recruit new adherents. This Berge typology (1990) is particularly useful in mapping the patterns of how the genre norms in textbook tasks evolve over time under various converging and diverging socio-ideological and socio-academic arrangements. Within this parameter, it is interesting and worth observing how the genre norm (and consequently the corresponding discursive strategies) of media and information literacy textbook task design will unfold in due course considering MIL's standing as a relatively new subject area in the country's academic landscape.

Maintaining Genre Norms

In their textbook analysis, Bakken and Andersson-Bakken (2021) revealed that the Turkish science and language arts textbook tasks which they reviewed only manifested "marginal change" when compared to the counterpart textbook tasks published before the national curricular reform. These research findings showed that the textbook tasks in question failed to afford the learners with "sufficient opportunities to practice the competences underscored in the new curriculum" (Bakken & Andersson-Bakken 2021). As such, the researchers conjectured that the tendency of textbook tasks to retain their inherent features generation after generation can be attributed to the "culturally specific genre norms". Drawing from rhetoric and linguistic theories, the researchers defined genre as a "recurring and culturally specific textual pattern" (Bakken & Anderson-Bakken 2021), hence its observable regularity and persistent embodiment in the pedagogical devices of the more well-established subject areas such as Science, Math, English, and Social Studies. In another light, Wang (2006: 65) maintained that genre possesses the attributes of being "*conservative* and *creative*" because of the condition and pattern of being "relatively stable and at the same time open to change". Bakken and Anderson-Bakken (2021) went on to conclude that the observed similarities or differences among the academic authors in designing textbook tasks are determined by their membership (or non-membership) to a specific discourse community. Breaking the discourse community's prevailing norms by virtue of conceptualizing alternative and unorthodox textbook tasks however "runs the risk of being rejected or misunderstood by other members" (Bakken & Andersson-Bakken 2021). This then points to the conservative inclination and institutional persistence of sticking with the old discursive

and pedagogical norms and traditions.

Making Sense of Curriculum Ideologies

Textbooks are concrete embodiments of the curriculum. As politico-cultural artifacts, textbooks are influenced and shaped by curriculum ideologies and, by and large, these ideological underpinnings are reflected and communicated in the rendering of the instructional materials either as a coherent whole or in a contradictory pattern. According to curriculum specialist Michael Stephen Schiro (2013), every curriculum ideology possesses specific assumptions about idealized knowledge types, learning styles, instructional modalities, and assessment strategies in relation to the political standpoint and value system that it espouses. With the aim of organizing the body of concepts, constructs, and precepts surrounding the process of teaching and learning, Schiro (2013) outlined and expounded the four curriculum ideologies, namely (1) Scholar Academic, (2) Social Efficiency, (3) Learner-Centered, and (4) Social Reconstruction. *Scholar Academic ideology* subscribes to the idea that the refined sets of knowledge that were developed over the years must be taught and handed down to the younger generations of scholars, with the two-pronged objectives of advancing the academic discipline and broadening its base of scholar-adherents. This is programmed through a system of formal, rigid, and hierarchical structure. *Social Efficiency ideology* believes that the end-goal of formal education is to efficiently and effectively facilitate the students' acquisition of practical knowledge, skills, and values to fulfill the functional needs of the workplace and prospective clients. *Learner-Centered* ideology as the name implies accords central importance to the inherent attributes and potentialities of

the students in determining, defining, and influencing their learning experience. This learning takes place within the context of the students' interaction with their physico-geographic, politico-economic, and socio-academic environments. Lastly, *Social Reconstruction* ideology works on the fundamental premise that the structural flaws in the education system and the society where it is historically situated require critical interrogation and transformation in the broader and thoroughgoing style. Within this context, education is conceived as a "social process through which society is reconstructed".

Despite the long-standing contradictions across these curricular ideologies, one cannot discount the fact that there are identifiable points of intersection wherein it is possible to constructively combine elements in developing new and more socio-politically and socio-culturally aligned frameworks and approaches. For instance, the place-oriented attributes of Learner-Centered ideology complement well the empowering pedagogical orientation of the Social Reconstruction ideology to serve the goal of achieving a culturally appropriate, socially relevant, and inclusive education.

Based on the foregoing, ideology not only provides individuals and institutions a subjective lens though which to interpret the social world but also the action component to determine "what it ought to be" (Steger 2003) and to engender how to effect transformation. Consistent with the Social Reconstruction framework, ideology also provides a "guide and compass for social and political action" (Steger 2003) and serves as a unifying thread to strengthen the collective resolve to carry out educational change.

Embodying the Media Awareness Education Principles

Consistent with the praxis of transformation, pioneering media education scholar Len Masterman (1989) forwarded eighteen mutually reinforcing basic principles in media awareness education; to wit: (1) media education as an empowering and democratizing practice, (2) representation as media's "central unifying concept", (3) media education as a "lifelong process", (4) "critical intelligence and critical autonomy", (5) media education as an "investigative" work, (6) media education as situational and contextual, (7) "content" as a means to an end and the "analytical tools" as the end, (8) "application of critical thinking to new context" and "student commitment" as criteria in media education effectiveness, (9) "student formative and summative self-evaluation" as ideal systems of assessment, (10) media education as a reflective and dialogic exercise for teachers and learners, (11) "dialogue" as media education's means to carry out investigations, (12) media education as a participatory and democratic learning process, (13) media education being about new ways of learning than merely about a new subject area, (14) "collaborative learning" as media education's pedagogical approach, (15) "cultural criticism and critical practice", (16) media education as a holistic and interactive process, (17) "principle of continuous change", (18) knowledge as "subject of critical investigation and dialogue" from which "new knowledge is actively created by students and teachers". In the context of media literacy education, this set of complementary principles can be employed as an overarching framework in developing alternative textbook tasks that possess the attributes of reflectivity, inclusivity, creativity, criticality, autonomy, and sustainability.

Confronting the Pitfalls in Media Literacy Education

Apparently, the development of media literacy education does not proceed steadily and unchallenged. As a social practice, it is also subject to intense contradiction. Media scholar David Buckingham (2019) argued about the three main pitfalls in media education. First is the tendency of media education to assume a "protectionist" stance and policing role. This approach, according to Buckingham (2019), may "wean children off media altogether". It is also perceived by learners as imposing, rigid and controlling, thereby depriving them of personal autonomy and political agency. Second is the premise that media education serves as a panacea of sort to unmask and confront the mainstream propaganda. This assumption, he contended, presupposes that learners will automatically gain political awareness when exposed to alternative principles and practices, failing to take into serious account that consciousness-raising involves a complex and protracted process. Last is the contention that the "advent of Media Studies 2.0" where students are now fully exposed and immersed would instinctively and automatically enable them “to become creative, to express themselves, and to achieve liberation". He forewarned that this notion creates a wrong impression that in the era of digital revolution the teaching of creativity and critical thinking becomes redundant and hence a pointless exercise.

In his paper “Civic Media Literacies: Re-Imagining Engagement for Civic Intentionality”, media scholar Paul Mihailidis (2018: 4-5) problematized the “contemporary media literacy initiatives and interventions” within the context of the “new media and socio-political realities of our time”, arguing that these approaches alone are “not sufficient to respond to the realities of today’s information environments”. Along

this line, he also pointed out the following interrelated socio-pedagogical pitfalls: (1) notion that "critical distance from media" is instantly achievable, (2) assumption that "skill attainment" automatically leads to an enhanced media literacy level, (3) tendency to focus on media criticism that "can skew critical inquiry to fault finding", (4) preference for content *per se* at the expense of critically looking at "how the content is impacted by algorithms and platforms", and (5) reliance on "individual responsibility" (Mihailidis 2018) to the detriment of collective responsibility and corporate accountability. If strategically employed, the alternative set of textbook tasks with civic-intentioned and praxis-based attributes can effectively respond to these aforementioned media education issues and challenges by (1) making the students perceptively and critically deal with the ubiquitous media, (2) scaffolding and building upon mutually reinforcing pedagogies in media and information literacy, (3) proposing reflective media principles and practices, (4) exposing and coming to grips with manipulative algorithms and platforms, and (5) engendering the culture of collective responsibility in confronting complex media pathologies and disorders.

As a counterpoint to the traditionally individualist instructional paradigm, Henry Jenkins (2006) introduced the '*participatory culture*' of learning which possesses the attributes of being open, civic-oriented, creative, supportive, and, most crucially, socially connected. Participatory culture subscribes to the pedagogical tradition of broadening the base of student competencies by developing *new skills* but not setting aside the old ones that remain viable and when adopted in conjunction are, in fact, complementary and synergistic. Jenkins (2006) further argues that acquiring new media literacies must be conceived as a process of 'expansion' instead of 'substitution' and that traditional

skills are ‘essential’ but ‘not sufficient’. This set of new media literacies constitutes the following distinct but interconnected skills, namely: “play, performance, simulation, appropriation, multitasking, distributed cognition, collective intelligence, judgment, transmedia navigation, networking, and negotiation” (Jenkins 2006). Fundamentally, Jenkins (2006) views *new media literacies* as ‘social skills’ considering their “ways of interacting within a larger community, and not simply an individualized set of skills to be used for personal expression”. As a media scholar, Jenkins believes that this ‘new knowledge culture’ must be mainstreamed to go beyond traditional school-based group works and implemented also “through long-distance collaborations across different learning communities” (Jenkins 2006), quite similar with how the virtual community of learners (e-CoL) is put into practice.

Framing Media Education Approaches

Media scholars Douglas Kellner and Jeff Share (2007) forwarded their conceptualization of four media education approaches upon which the academic authors and their textbook tasks were examined in this communication research. The first one being the *protectionist approach* which argues that the role of media education is to “inoculate people against the dangers of media manipulation and addiction” (Kellner & Share 2007: 2). Kellner and Share (2007) cited that the ideologies from both sides of the political spectrum instrumentalize formal media education to “blame the media”, i.e., conservatives viewing media as a threat to the society’s moral fabric while some of the progressive segments attributing to media the rise of ultra-individualism and ultra-consumerism. The second approach pertains to *media arts*

education which centers on the creative, aesthetic, and technical dimensions of media production and consumption, leading to the tendency of "favoring individualistic self-expression over socially conscious analysis" (Kellner & Share 2007: 3). The third approach refers to the *media literacy movement* which accords heavy premium on the composite set of literacy skills (i.e., media literacy, information literacy, technological literacy, digital literacy, library literacy, etc.) but is found wanting of the socio-historical and socio-ideological analysis needed to problematize the "role of language and communication to define relationships of power and domination" (Kellner & Share 2007: 4). *Critical media literacy* is the fourth approach and the alternative one which they advocate for in engendering education, media, and communication activism. Consistent with the notion that literacy involves "family of practices", critical media literacy integrates some of the viable attributes of the previous approaches but with particular emphasis on "ideology critique", "politics of representation", and "alternative media production" (Keller & Share 2007: 4-5). As a "multi-perspectival inquiry", critical media literacy employs various literacies, technologies, and tools to tell the narratives of the marginalized and to privilege their subdued voices. This runs parallel with critical discourse analysis-related inquiries that are promotive of "multiplicity of analysis", "plurality of approach", and "multiplicity of conceptions" (Al Maghlouth 2017: 56, 57 & 69). In his study, for instance, Al Maghlouth utilized a multileveled approach that combined textual, intertextual, and socio-cognitive analysis in apprehending women and social change as represented in blogposts.

Exposing the Limits of Conventional Textbook Task Designs

In their textbook research in the field of Natural Sciences, Anderson-Bakken, Jegstad, and Bakken (2020) sought to examine how the textbook tasks mediate the view of science to the Norwegian learners. The study indicated that the textbook tasks were "closed" and aimed only at requiring the learners to repeat and reproduce already well-established facts drawn straight from the instructional materials and other available academic resources. Interestingly, the research also revealed that there were observable variations in the style by which the textbook tasks were rendered within and across textbook chapters. For instance, while there were textbook tasks in some chapters which are of repetition and reproduction types only, there were also other learning activities that allowed students to "explore and evaluate evidence", specifically on chapters featuring "*socio-scientific issues*". The research concluded that the textbook tasks in general are not promotive of "scientific inquiry" and do not also engender higher order thinking skills (HOTS), except only for the textbook tasks that foregrounded socio-scientific dimensions. Within this context, it can be inferred that the mainstreaming of social and sectoral issues in media and information literacy or in any subject area for that matter can *potentially* contribute to the promotion of the learners' critical and evaluative skills.

A preliminary examination of the existing Media and Information Literacy curriculum guide (CG) provided by the Department of Education (2013) revealed that the following diverse but interconnected topics and subtopics can be potentially broadened, deepened, and contextualized through the adoption of the trifocal meta-attributes of

civic-intentioned, place-based, and praxis-oriented pedagogy.

Table 1: Key topics in Media and Information Literacy curriculum guide with strong social and sectoral dimensions

"role and function of media in a democratic society"	"indigenous media"
"sources of media and information"	"how a particular individual or society is portrayed in public using different types of media"
MIL's role in achieving "improved quality of life, greater political participation, better economic opportunities, improved learning environment, more cohesive social units, etc."	"negative effects of media information on individuals and society"
"threats, risks, abuse, and misuse" in media	"opportunities and challenges: economic, educational, social and political"

Source: Department of Education Media and Information Literacy Curriculum Guide (2013)

Understanding the Discursive Purpose of Questions

Linguist Angeliki Athanasiadou (1991: 107) maintained that "at the outset of a question, contextual and/or pragmatic information is present in the speaker's mind". This, therefore, points to the fact that every question has an underlying intention that reflects the social position and values orientation of its source/sender/encoder. She added that question as a "speech act" also reveals the social relationship that is involved in the communication event. In the case of questions that are contained in any textbook task, the norm that conventionally governs the socio-academic relationship

between the textbook writers and the learners is “authoritative”. This norm-based interaction, she pointed out, renders the mode of questioning structured and predictable. Following Athanasiadou (1991), the authors’ intention in the specific case of this qualitative inquiry is a crucial determinant of the speech act’s formal didactic structure. Both the overt and covert meanings of the question, therefore, can be derived from the authors’ positionality (i.e., achieved and/or ascribed status) and intentionality (i.e., motivation). In the typology of modes of questioning that she developed, the questions in the textbook tasks fall under the *examination type*, i.e., assessment of the learners’ knowledge, competence, and values. Within this communication context and given the social relationship involved, textbook task by its very nature not only seeks to instruct but also to persuade, command, and, ultimately, control. This *speech context* presupposes that the author is in a dominant position and that the learners must only comply and supply the appropriate answer or response. However, this does not have to be always the case because question in its critico-political form can, in fact, interrogate mainstream discourses as well as instantiate counter-discourses about media, education, and the broader development ecology.

Apprehending the Meanings behind the Discourse

Communication media such as textbooks “provide the terrain where meaning is shaped” (Griffin 1991) and where the discursive intentions of their producers are expressed, enacted, and even questioned. In this sense, the textbook task section serves as a critical component and pedagogical extension of this *discursive landscape*.

Textbook tasks form as a substantive part of assessment whichever type of assessment they particularly serve, i.e., assessment for learning, assessment as learning, and assessment of learning. As a didactic form of media, textbook tasks provide instructions to communicate directives, facilitate comprehension, and assess learning. By employing critical discourse analysis, this study sought to surface and examine the counter-discourses about the material/nonmaterial realities of development/underdevelopment in various but interconnected realms of mainstream economy, politics, and culture and the corresponding counter-pedagogies that can potentially bring about civic intentioned, place-conscious, and critical education.

Exposing the "In-betweens" in Discursive Acts

International textbook research specialist Eckhardt Fuchs and 'textbook as media' expert Annakatrin Bock (2018: 1) underscored that textbooks are not merely "mediators of knowledge" as these instructional materials also "(1) contain and enshrine underlying norms and values, (2) transmit constructions of identity, and (3) generate specific patterns of perceiving the world". For instance, the manner wherein textbook authors socially and ideologically position students through the tasks they require can contribute to the crystallization of *genre norm* and *identity construction* over time. This, therefore, requires an analytic tool that (1) pays serious attention to content, (2) situates the production of the text in its specific socio-historical context, and (3) provides a thoroughgoing critique.

Through critical discourse analysis, the often ignored and unseen connections between ideologies, discourses, and power relations are examined, analyzed, and,

ultimately, challenged. Branston and Stafford (2010) maintained that critical discourse analysis enlightens us about the "in-between areas" of how discourses, ideologies, and epistemologies become ingrained in human interactions and relationships. As an approach in critical communication research, it exposes and interrogates the social structures that influence the traditionally covert power dynamics embodied in discourse. Along this line, Santiago (2007: 1) argues that “discourse is a site of struggle and should be understood in the context of power where ideological assumptions are often hidden in language”.

Johnson and McLean (2020) pointed out that critical discourse analysis concerns the investigation of the “social and material consequences of discourse”. From the Marxist standpoint, these social and material dimensions refer to the society’s superstructure and substructure, respectively, including their dialectical interaction (i.e., political economy). Politico-economic forces shape discourse and, in turn, discourse also influences the social and economic realities of individuals, communities, and institutions. This socio-material emphasis (i.e., dialectics of economic and non-economic dimensions), therefore, points to the necessity to incorporate the political economy of media not just as a subject of interest but also as a frame of analysis in media and information literacy education.

PHILOSOPHICAL ASSUMPTIONS

Critical Ontology, Epistemology, Axiology, and Praxeology

The ontological assumption of this critical textbook task inquiry maintains that a political matrix of supremacy and control governs human relationships in every social institution and that through critical communication praxis this power configuration can be systematically exposed and challenged. This prevailing social structure also manifests vividly in the systems of knowledge production, transmission, and application. Specifically, such knowledge regime is well-entrenched in the mechanisms that rule over various scholarly politico-communicative pursuits such as but not limited to curriculum development, textbook writing, assessment formulation, and task design.

Critical political economy reveals that whoever "controls the purse" also wields undue influence over (1) what lessons to teach, (2) what research works to undertake, (3) what books to publish, (4) what knowledge systems to privilege, (5) what values to privilege, (6) what competencies to assess, (7) what questions to ask, (8) what activities to require, (9) who gets to benefit from these wide-ranging but interanimating social practices and intellectual undertakings, and, ultimately, (10) what diverging standpoints arise from the diverse positionalities of the education stakeholders. It is along this line that this qualitative textbook research anchored its epistemological and axiological assumptions in investigating the socio-academic world.

Consistent with the critical tradition's radical stance, the praxeological assumption of this alternative textbook research is that the asymmetrical power structure in the

academic ecology is essentially socially constructed and, as such, it can also be politically reversed through the sustained acts of (1) self-reflection, (2) reflective action, and (3) collective reflective action (Freire 1970; McLaren & Crawford 2010). As a counter-theory, this critical frame of analysis draws its strength from the tradition of *intersecting ethics with politics* to confront the taken-for-granted assumptions about power, autonomy, identity, ideology, voice, values, knowledge, discourse, and pedagogy. As a progressive politico-intellectual tradition, this critical approach also seeks to trace (or, more pressingly, "uproot") the superordinate factors (i.e., root causes) that in the first place brought into existence the hegemonic and onerous social patterns and practices in media and education.

THEORETICAL LENS

This communication research falls under the *critical tradition* or the *discourse of suspicion*. As a counter-paradigm, the critical tradition exposes and opposes the deeply rooted structures of domination predicated on various social identities such as class, ethnicity, gender, age, ability, faith, heritage, geographical location, and ideology that may appear in overt and covert ways in social relationships.

In particular, this qualitative study adopts the three attributes of the critical theory forwarded by Max Horkheimer, i.e., being explanatory (*exposition*), normative (*opposition*), and practical (*proposition*), aimed at (1) revealing the contradictions among the social forces in education, media, and the broader development ecology, (2) providing a normative lens to examine and challenge the prevailing structures of

social inequality, and (3) creating an alternative and liberating social order that will replace the old arrangement. Within the context of this politico-communicative inquiry, this set of critical attributes can then be incorporated and embodied in the discursive countercurrents in conceptualizing, designing, and developing textbook tasks.

Hegemonic textbooks breed ideological colonization by functioning practically as unchallenged “thought police” that bring about far-reaching consequences not only to functional literacy but also to the political education of the community of learners. From the critical perspective, communication artifacts and knowledge products such as mainstream textbooks and the set of tasks contained therein function as “social texts", which can then be subjected to *discursive inquiry, contestation,* and, more crucially, *transformation*.

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The prescribed textbook tasks in Media and Information Literacy instructional materials served as the main subject of this critical discourse analysis. As a *paratext*, the tasks were textually and contextually analyzed through the identification and examination of the discursive and pedagogical counter-imperatives that were embodied, interlaced, and imbricated in the textbook questions, directives, instantiations, and interpositions.

In this qualitative research, the communicative practice of textbook task formulation was unmasked as a discursive arena of politico-normative act of privileging *or*

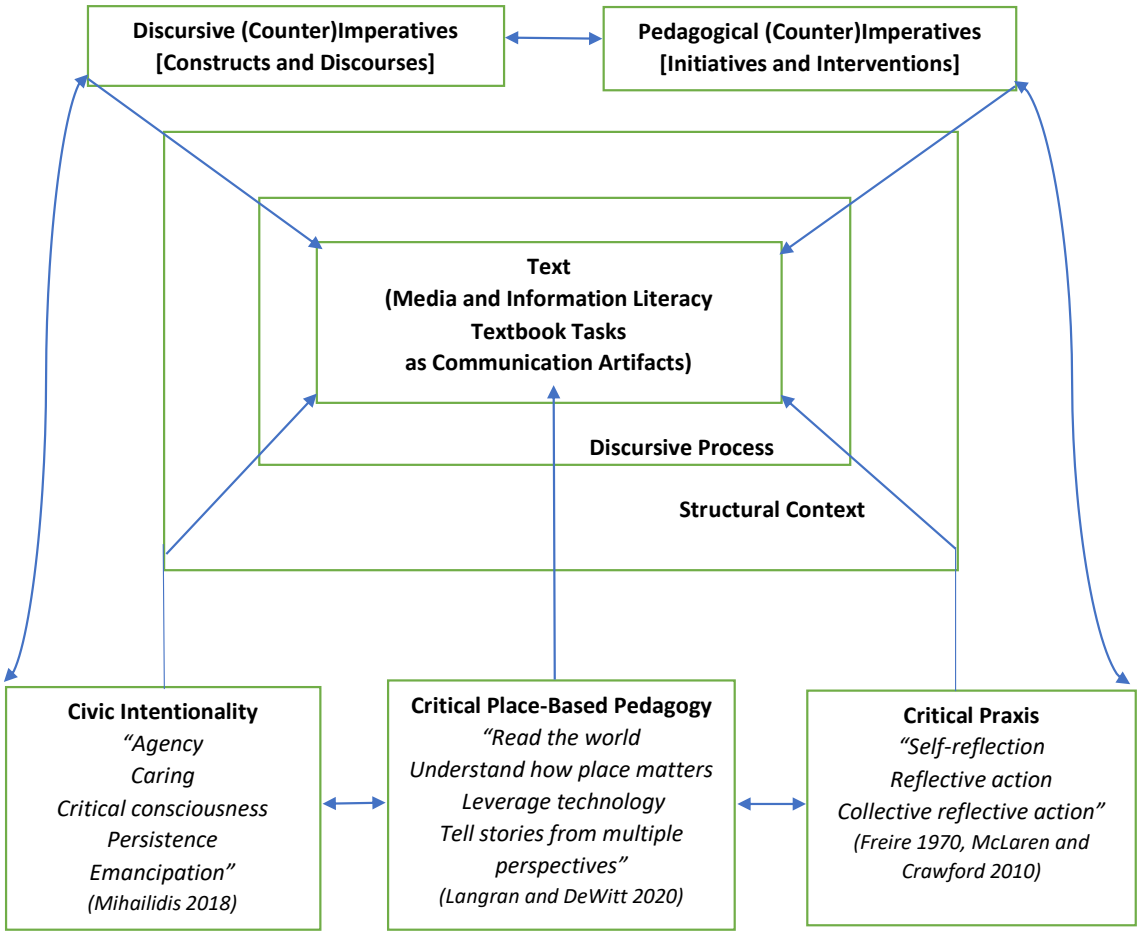
interrogating a particular system of knowledge production and dissemination.
By employing critical discourse analysis, textbook tasks were subjected to a process of examination that problematized the text itself (micro) and the broader social context (macro) of its situatedness. Critical discourse analysis bears significant relevance and usefulness because of its "multiplicity of analysis", "plurality of approach", and "multiplicity of conceptions" when adopted as a theoretical and methodological approach in qualitative research (Al Maghlouth 2017: 56, 57 & 69). By its very nature, qualitative studies stand to achieve a "deeper understanding rather than merely examining the surface" of social and sectoral issues, thus affording this research to pursue and arrive at the "multiple ways of establishing truth" and making critical sense also of its bases, contexts, and debates (Golafshani 2003: 10).

More specifically, the textbook tasks from the body of selected materials were examined to identify and surface the elements and constructs of 'civic intentionality' (Mihailidis 2018), 'critical place-based inquiry' (Langran & DeWitt 2020), and 'critical praxis' (Freire 1970; McLaren & Crawford 2010) and determine how they mutually reinforce each other in engendering engaged scholarship and social justice education in media and information literacy.

In accordance with the discourse of suspicion (Mumby 1997), critical communication inquiry directs its skepticism and criticism to the power centers in their various embodiments such as the government agencies, publishing firms, and the educational institutions. In addition, critical textbook research must also be cognizant of the fact that the realm of knowledge is indispensably a *site of contradiction* whereby textbook authors as ideological agents employ and deploy *conservative, liberal,* and/or

progressive perspectives, pedagogies, and practices in designing tasks and shaping the teaching-learning praxis.

Figure 1 Analytical Framework



Critical Discourse Analysis: Revealing the "Story behind the Story"

Considering its unmistakably dialectical stance, critical discourse analysis directs the focus of this research to the contradictions between the "*dominant and subordinate discourses*" as well as the various "*notions of resistance and appropriation of discourse*" that are at play (Williamson, Given & Scifleet 2018). Such notions of dominance and

resistance are conceived to glaringly manifest in the discourses and counter-discourses in the textbook tasks, respectively. The elucidation that follows best exemplifies the politico-ethical roles (i.e., reflective, investigative, and transformative) that this discursive-analytic framework fosters, represents, and can potentially enact, to wit:

> *In doing so, critical discourse analysis not only captures something important about the social world, but also play a key ethical and political role in showing how social phenomena are discursively constituted: it demonstrates how things come to be as they are, that they could be different, and thereby that they can be changed (Williamson, Given & Scifleet 2018).*

As a counter-approach in the research tradition, critical discourse analysis is concerned in "exposing the complicity of language use in micro and macro processes of power and inequality" (Hasting 2012) and "how the details of text can serve to reproduce the workings of ideology" (Billig 2008 as cited in Hasting 2012).

The macro-structural context that surrounds the textbook shapes its process of inception and materialization as a cultural product. This broader context reflects the following attributes of the textbook and its constitutive textbook tasks, namely: (1) textbooks as embodied curricula, (2) textbook tasks' formal and didactic structure, (3) textbook tasks as politico-communicative expressions, and (4) the commercial nature of textbooks as media products. As communication artifacts, textbooks can be conceived as "instantiations of socially regulated discourses and that the processes of production and reception are socially constrained" (Janks 1997: 1). Ultimately, these socially imposed parameters in the micro, meso, and macro levels will influence every dimension and stage of developing the textbook task and how this key component of learning will end up (and eventually reinforced or even challenged) in the printed and

electronic forms of the instructional resources.

Civic Intentionality: Expanding Education and Democracy

In his book “Civic Media Literacies: Re-Imagining Human Connection in an Age of Digital Abundance”, Mihailidis (2019) argued about the need to "reinsert human connectedness in the culture of digital abundance" in fostering social solidarity and community engagement. He further pointed out that for the longest time media literacy education only “held these views implicitly” and that there is now a sense of greater urgency to actually “embrace civic intentionality instead of assume it” (Mihailidis 2019). The vision, therefore, must be translated into informed action and, within the parameter of this study, it can only be actualized and sustained through the instantiation of social and sectoral issues as well as the interposition of community-oriented interventions and initiatives in the textbook tasks.

Boyte (2014) as cited in Mihailidis (2018) observed about the prevailing ‘civic agency gap’ which pertains to the gap “between concern and capacity to act” as manifested by the disconnect between “being aware” and “meaningful engagement or action-taking” within the digital realm. The common tendency to concentrate on media text analysis and media criticism without the corollary community-oriented application is a testament to this long-standing issue of ‘civic agency gap’.

Echoing Mihailidis’ (2018) injunction that media education must manifest strong “civic intentionality”, this research exposition argues that the textbook task segment possesses an immense potential to expand democratic education and engage the class and the local community in the *collective task* of tackling pressing social and sectoral

issues. To advance this civic intentionality framework, Mihailidis articulated five distinct yet overlapping core constructs and values, i.e., agency, care, critical consciousness, persistence, and emancipation, that are mutually reinforcing in achieving the social goals of radical democracy and communication activism.

Agency

'Agency' refers to the people's strong resolve to challenge the existing order and re-imagine as well as co-create an alternative one. According to Arendth (1984) as cited in Mihailidis (2018), agency is closely linked to the "freedoms that enable people to feel *empowered to act in public* (emphasis mine)". Agency is also conceived to be exercised in various levels, namely "personal, the proxy, and the collective" (Mihailidis, 2018: 9). In accomplishing textbook tasks, *personal agency* pertains to the strong commitment of the learners to assert their politico-ideological standpoint about pressing social and sectoral issues. *Proxy agency*, on the other hand, concerns the power to act on behalf of the other. As proxy agents, learners, for instance, may produce a community-oriented video advocating for the legitimate rights and fundamental freedoms of the subaltern and the disenfranchised. Lastly, *collective agency* can be embodied when the learners and their interlocutors co-conceptualize and co-create community-oriented advocacy materials with the goal of advancing their mutual interests.

Care

The ethics of 'care' is demonstrated through the benevolent and compassionate

attitude towards others, especially for the most threatened and vulnerable segments of the society (e.g., indigenous people, farm workers, and municipal fisherfolks). According to Mihailidis (2018), it is assumed that "caring emerges naturally through media inquiry process that opens learners up to more *diverse* and *divergent* views". He further pointed out that incorporating the construct of care in media literacy makes "bridging communities together" a moral imperative where the values of "receptivity and relatedness" as well as "interdependence and engrossment" are the social and ethical norms (Mihailidis 2018). Such caring culture creates an enabling social environment wherein "all voices and interests are represented, accounted for, and involved in sharpening the outputs and effects of media practice" (Gordon & Mugar as cited in Mihailidis 2018). Towards this end, the civic-intentioned textbook tasks will influence and enable the learners to develop an other-oriented (*kapwa*-oriented) culture that relates with community interlocutors as their allies and co-equals.

Critical consciousness

'Critical consciousness' is best summed up by the following attributes, i.e., "being radically curious, politically aware, and empowered to intervene" (Mihailidis 2018: 10). It is a frame of analysis that views a particular deplorable social condition as an opportunity to *tackle* and *transform*. Mihailidis (2018: 10) even sought to *up the ante* by arguing that media literacies must go beyond merely engaging in reflection and dialogue about media texts "while often times limiting discussions of boundaries, oppressors, and oppression, and the ability to transform". Textbook tasks that are conceptualized along the critical line also embolden learners into becoming change agents and social

mobilizers, departing sharply from the orthodoxies of being mere ivory tower scholars and armchair researchers. As a progressive construct, critical consciousness empowers the students to contend and interrogate preconceived notions about development and underdevelopment as well as intervene and act upon systemic and structural challenges that confront their ranks.

Persistence

'Persistence' refers to the strong resolve and sense of purpose that is necessary in hurdling obstacles to progress. Persistence, in more specific terms, pertains to the capacity to develop deep commitment and persevering attitude to stay on track "despite failure, adversity, and plateau" brought about by the challenges associated with and spawned by the *dysfunctional digital culture* (Duckworh et al. 2007 as cited in Mihailidis 2018). A textbook that maintains a consistent public-oriented and values-based task design across all its chapters despite the prevailing individualist and consumerist culture both in the realms of education and media is an expression of this persistent character.

Emancipation

Scholar Stefania Milan (2019) envisions "community radio and television station, independent print media initiative, and community-owned wireless network" as concrete embodiments of 'emancipatory communication', arguing further that these *democratic initiatives* and *innovations* allow "horizontal production" and inclusive sharing of knowledge. This alternative communication praxis affords the people "the power of deciding who should speak, what messages should be transmitted, and on what

conditions" (Milan 2016 as cited in Mihailidis 2018). In addition, Mihailidis (2000: 11) also deplores the tendency of traditional media literacy education to "refrain from engaging with political ideologies and choosing sides", thereby "restricting or constraining individuals and communities in their pursuit of bringing people together in pursuit of a common good". When conceived consistent with emancipatory communication, the textbook task section then becomes a counter-cultural instrument against orthodoxy, exclusivity, and passivity. Moreover, it will also help the learners to apprehend and problematize the prevailing digital platforms and algorithms and the dysfunctions that they bring about to social institutions and social relationships.

Critical Place-Based Inquiry: Fusing Pedagogy and Politics

Employing Langran and DeWitt's (2020) critical place-based inquiry, the textbook tasks were examined how the social practices of (1) apprehending the world, (2) valuing the place, (3) leveraging the technology, and (4) presenting narratives from various vantage points are reflected and embodied. Complementarily, these social practices are employed in addition to the following mutually reinforcing attributes of the standard place-based pedagogy, i.e., "learner-centered, inquiry-based, intergenerational, community as classroom, cross-curricular, curriculum with context, and local to global" (Liebtag 2019, Teton Sciences School 2021, Bhat 2016).

Forerunners of critical place-based inquiry assert that people should (re)inhabit and (re)claim their localities and not merely reside on them. Based on the *new localism* framework, "residing in a space" pertains only to the simple act of physically/geographically staying in a locality without the sense of place and the eco-

cultural rootedness that are necessary in developing collective critical imagination and action orientation. As a political act, "(re)inhabiting the place" engenders and activates (1) community-orientedness, (2) ethical governance, (3) critical inquiry, and (4) contextual education. In this sense, the role of critical place-based media and information literacy is therefore crucial in achieving this avowed mission of “social re-rooting” by perceptively appraising the social world, apprehending the centrality of the place, taking advantage of available information and communication technologies, and ensuring that no voice is muted or subdued.

Read the World

A hallmark of critical place-based inquiry is being able to “connect with the course content” by “anchoring the student investigation in the real world” (Langran & DeWitt 2020: 58). This process involves the tasks to “gather information, make observations, and pose questions about their community or the environments that are being studied” (Langran & DeWitt 2020: 58). A crucial preliminary guiding question that must be answered and clarified is about the “best features of our community” and the corresponding actions which must be carried out to “make it a better place for all” (McInerney, Smyth & Down 2011 as cited in Langran & DeWitt 2020: 59). This *socio-ecological inventory*, so to speak, encompasses local resources such as the natural environment, public infrastructure, and non-tangible heritage (i.e., *likas at likha*).

Understand Why Place Matters

Consistent with the discourse of suspicion’s dialectical rendering, critical place-based

inquiry enjoins learners to “notice what they can see as well as what is missing” (Langran & Dewitt 2020: 61). In this way, students become conscious of what is communicated/not communicated, included/excluded, and emphasized/de-emphasized in the depiction of the ‘*community as text*’. Critical place-based textbook tasks also afford the learners to be self-reflective of their social situatedness in the process of carrying out their media analysis and media production. This involves the interrogation of their long-harbored mental models about development issues and media representations. Correspondingly and necessarily, “learning activities should be designed… to confront the assumptions student make based on their previous experiences”, thereby underscoring the importance of problematizing prior knowledge and preconceived notions (Langran & DeWitt 2020: 61).

Leverage Technology

By integrating critical media literacy and critical place-based inquiry, available information and communication technologies are employed to gather, store and process “many forms of data that can be geotagged”, which can then be “integrated for analysis” (Langran & DeWitt 2020). Comprehensively, this would cover media products and media technologies such as photographs, sketches, notes, maps, and audio recordings, including geographic information system (GIS), which can be instrumentalized to critically make sense of human (and conceivably as well as what post-humanists call as *non-human* and *more-than-human*) geographies and ecologies.

Tell Stories from Multiple Perspectives

In various ways, the enduring local narratives influence the learners' understanding of the place as well as the stories that they will consequently create and narrate. The process of collecting and communicating these narratives also "makes it possible to compare similarities and differences" (Langran and DeWitt 2020: 63), thereby enabling the students to deepen their "understanding of place as socially constructed" (Elwood 2004 as cited in Langran and DeWitt 2020: 63). This will also allow them to ponder how the diverging social forces in every locality bring about political contradictions as well as transformations.

Critical Praxis: Philosophy, Practice, and People's Solidarity

As an integral component of textbooks, the student task section essentially acts as *extension* of the academic lessons and, as the *application dimension* of learning, it serves as the *platform* where self-reflection, reflective action, and collective reflective action (Freire 1970, McLaren & Crawford 2010) can be potentially and progressively actualized, i.e., *stage by stage*. Consistent with critical education praxis, the objective of revealing the overt and covert social discourses and pedagogical values in the textbook tasks is crucial in making learning a reflective and transformative process from within (i.e., self-reflection) and even more so if it is extended beyond and carried out collectively (i.e., reflective action and collective reflective action).

Chapter III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

"Make strange the familiar world…, and in so doing, identify possibilities for productive change." – Jennifer Alford

Critical Communication Research

Progressive communication researchers contend that mainstream media scholarship tends to raise questions that are "not really the important ones when it comes to understanding the role of mass media in society" (Turow 2011: 137). This lamentable tendency foregoes the potential of communication and media inquiry in contributing to both areas of critical media scholarship and practice. Development Communication scholar Higino Ables (2003: 135) had a similar observation in many journal publications where "answers to questions have been found wanting", arguing further that cultural studies and critical media theories must be taken more seriously. In view of these postulations, alternative communication research therefore becomes even more pressing if situated within the interconnected realms of media, education, ethics, and development. As such, the crucial role of the critical tradition (*discourse of suspicion*) in communication studies cannot be overemphasized in view of its central objectives of fostering "(1) reflexivity, (2) a capacity for fantasy, and (3) a new basis for praxis in an increasingly alienated world" (Bronner 1994: 3).

Subjective Dimension of the Study

For this qualitative communication research, the subjective dimensions of the study

are the discursive and pedagogical (counter)imperatives that are expressed in the textbook tasks under consideration. Aside from traditionally functioning as purveyor of dominant ideologies, discourses and pedagogies, textbook task can also *alternatively* serve as a *countercultural force* in education, communication, and media. Quite similar with any other process of media text production, designing textbook task is also essentially a *political exercise* which is not insulated from the coalescing and/or contending social forces in the media and education industries as well as in the broader politico-economic system.

Primary Data Source and Unit of Analysis

The communication component of interest that was examined in this qualitative inquiry is the *message* and this particularly comes in the form of textbook tasks conceptualized and formulated by the academic authors as *media producers*. The primary data source and unit of analysis for this instructional communication research covered the student tasks featured in the seven selected commercially available Media and Information Literacy textbooks. This study included the various sections and subsections of the textbook tasks that appeared throughout the instructional materials, including the portions which seek to assess the students' prior knowledge.

To ensure plausibility and dependability, this research also encompassed the textbook authors' (1) preface that describes the section and subsection of the textbook tasks, (2) prelude to every task and learning activity, (3) situationer for each case analysis, (4) instantiation of context in the simulation exercises as well as the

(5) required and recommended reading and viewing tasks as subjects of analysis or enrichment materials.

The unintrusive nature of this qualitative communication research allowed the data to speak for itself. After all, the construction of the textbook task is designed to be thoroughly and clearly communicated by the academic authors to the intended audience through the written discourse in the form of introductions, directives, questions, instantiations, and interpositions.

Using Frey, Botan, and Kreps' categorization (2000: 227), instructional materials such as textbooks are considered as "*scripted* (i.e., planned ahead) and *public* (i.e., intended for general consumption)" and by rendering these materials available to the public readership, they become open to critical examination and interrogation.

The researcher also ensured that the selected textbooks for analysis represented at least 50% of the total number of Media and Information Literacy textbooks that were published from the time that this core subject was initially offered up to the duration of this current research (i.e., 2016 to 2022). The instructional materials under review, however, were limited only to the textbook titles with the broadest reach and circulation. In procuring the textbooks, the researcher (1) attended national and international book fairs, (2) visited academic publishing houses, and (3) checked online bookshops and thrift shops to determine the widespread adoption, check the availability, and procure printed copies of media and information literacy textbooks.

TRIANGULATION

Triangulation by Source

Textbook Authors' Profile and Bionote

The authors' profiles (or bionotes) which are commonly provided in the textbook content, including other pertinent academic and professional information about them that are available in reputable sources (e.g., institutional websites), were utilized to understand and examine their positionality as educators, researchers, and practitioners and how this social situatedness is reflected in the discourses, pedagogies and strategies employed and embodied in the textbook tasks and learning activities.

Textbook Authors' Published Research on MIL

Since some textbook authors are research scholars themselves, their published researches on subject matters that are similar or related to their textbook authorships were also covered for analysis (e.g., Alagaran's Philippine Media and Information Literacy and Outcomes-based Education).

Mainstream and Alternative News Media

Aside from the textbook tasks as the primary bases of textual analyses, the researcher also critically assessed the broader politico-economic ecology, i.e., the pressing social and sectoral issues during the period of textbook production, in order to determine if these development issues and debates are likewise reflected and incorporated in the textbook tasks as topics for reflection, deliberation, and/or case study. The social and sectoral issues instantiated by the academic writers in their

respective textbook task sections were perceptively examined in relation to the development and policy controversies that faced the nation during the previous and actual years of the instructional material's publication as reported in the mainstream and alternative news media. Local mainstream and alternative news media were systematically reviewed for the inventory of these contemporary development and policy issues by going over their summaries of news development, year-end reports, and online media archives.

Triangulation by Field of Study

By employing the *triangulation technique* and consistent with the goals of *interdisciplinary communication*, this research adopted a *cross-area approach* using the constructs, perspectives, and approaches from the different but interrelated substantive areas of communication studies, media studies, education studies, curriculum studies, and development studies.

Triangulation by Framework

A combination of mutually reinforcing tradition, frameworks, and tools of analysis were also employed, namely the critical tradition, critical discourse analysis, civic intentionality, critical place-based inquiry, and critical praxis method (5 Cs), in order to accomplish the research objectives of surfacing and examining the recurring discursive and pedagogical counter-imperatives in the prescribed textbook tasks from the selected socio-academic texts, including the academic authors' media education approach as well as the social positioning of learners in the context-based exercises.

Critical Discourse Analysis as Strategy of Inquiry

The primary framework and methodology adopted in this textbook research is critical discourse analysis. Through this approach, the overt as well as covert discursive and pedagogical features and patterns of the textbook tasks were identified and classified for deeper and more systematic analysis, evaluation, and interpretation.

A key attribute of Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis model is its capacity to problematize the *social phenomenon* (i.e., textbook task writing) and the *communication artifact* under review (i.e., textbooks and the tasks contained therein). The power of this model to describe, explain, and interrogate is derived from its encompassing and mutually reinforcing critical analysis of the micro, meso, and macro dimensions that are involved in the textbook task production. In the specific context of doing critical textbook research, the text in question (micro-scale) pertains to the textbook tasks. As a media text with a formal didactic and discursive structure, textbook tasks are conventionally rendered in *interrogative* (i.e., questions) and *imperative* (i.e., instructions) formats. In analyzing the discursive practice, critical discourse scholars look closely into the "*underlying processes*" of the discourse (Johnson & McLean 2020). In the context of this study, the focus was on the discursive processes and strategies that were involved in the textbook task production, thereby revealing and problematizing the *social practices* reflected in the texts (Sudajit-apa 2017: 2-3). And finally, in the analysis of social structures (macro-scale), the critical examination is directed at the broader education, media, business, and public sector ecologies where the textbook task production is socially contextualized. Critical discourse analysis,

therefore, afforded this researcher to acquire a deeper level of understanding of the dialectical and complex relationship between the "discourse, ideology, and the socio-material world" (Johnson & McLean 2020).

Critical Place-Based Inquiry

Drawing on Langran and DeWitt's (2020) critical place-based approach to complement critical discourse analysis, this communication research adopted the four sub-approaches in examining textbook tasks, namely "(1) reading the world, (2) understanding how place matters, (3) leveraging technology, and (4) telling stories from multiple perspectives". In employing this place-based strategy, primary importance is accorded to the contending discourses and pedagogies, and how these elements value (or devalue) and foreground (or downplay) the learners and their communities' socio-material *positionalities* and *potentialities*. And given its inherently critical orientation, Langran and DeWitt's (2020) approach does not turn a blind eye to any place's "prior histories of exploitation or historical inequality".

Critical Praxis

This qualitative research likewise adopted the three-fold elements and stages of *critical praxis*, namely (1) self-reflection, (2) reflective action, and (3) collective reflective action (Freire 1970, McLaren & Crawford 2010), in analyzing the textbook tasks of the Media and Information Literacy academic resources. This critical approach to the process of evaluating MIL education involves applying the dialectics of theory (i.e., reflection) and practice (i.e., action), and carrying out this informed action in the

collective level (i.e., solidarity). While media and information literacy must contribute to critical self-reflection, it should not begin and end at that level. While reflection is crucial in guiding action, reflection in turn must be validated and honed by practice. As the popular adage goes, theory without practice is *dead* while practice without theory is *blind*.

Drawing on Freire's notion of *human freedom*, transformation is conceived to take place in the individual (i.e., *self-change*) as well as broader societal level (i.e., *change of social conditions*). If applied in media education, praxis is embodied when there is an "authentic dialogue between learners" and when learning is contextualized in "the social reality in which people exist" (McLaren & Crawford 2010). Constituting this critical praxis method is the conscientious application of the progressive cycle of (1) problem identification, (2) problem research, (3) collective planning, (4) collective implementation of action plan, and (5) critical evaluation (Morrell & Duncan-Andrade as cited in McLaren & Crawford 2010).

The Researcher's Role

Consistent with the tradition of engaged scholarship, critical discourse analysis influences researchers to "explicitly engage with their own interests and positionality" and "practice self-critical reflexivity" in the entire process of the social inquiry (Johnson & McLean 2020). This, therefore, necessitates that the researchers also declare their politico-intellectual praxis and reflect how this will influence the social research that they are embarking on. As a critico-analytic inquiry, the researchers' interpretations therefore "cannot be separated from their own background, history, contexts, and prior

understandings" (Creswell 2009). Within this context, critical discourse analysis is also a useful tool in presenting the "social story at play in the investigation", including the revelation "why that particular person is relating that particular *tale*" (Williamson, Given, & Scifleet 2018).

As an enactment of the action-oriented and transformative attributes of critical discourse analysis, Johnson and McLean (2020) explained that this methodological approach "maintains an implicit impetus to intervene actively in, or challenge, the power relations or social problems under investigation". Both attributes are aligned with the self-reflection and reflective action stages of critical praxis (Freire 1970, McLaren & Crawford 2010). A committed and sustained effort to advance this *change praxis* must progressively lead to the eventual materialization of the third and final stage of reflective action at the collective level (i.e., collective reflective action).

Lindkvist (1981) as cited in Frey et al. (2000: 225) maintained that the meanings embedded in a text can be "identified with the producer, the consumer or the interpreter". In this specific qualitative textbook research, the discursive analysis is based on the critical perspective of the interpreter who is a communication scholar with a complementary background in development studies and governance. In hindsight, critical textbook studies has become this researcher's main area of interest since he entered the UP Open University's professional doctorate program in Communication in 2019 having written several mini-proposals and mini-papers about the subject matter (e.g., textbook use and student involvement for Communication 390, textbook politics also for Communication 390, integrated CSR communication of a textbook publishing firm for Communication 370, and textbook and voice for Communication 391). This

research disposition has its deep socio-personal and socio-political roots. As an educator, the researcher has long been interested in alternative pedagogies, especially those that are reflective, applied, and community-based in orientation. In handling courses in development studies and political economy, the researcher continues to engage in the process of discovering, exploring, and experimenting on various teaching and learning strategies, mostly of non-orthodox styles and traditions. This profound interest in pedagogy intersects with the social practice of Social Science textbook writing which is a different but a related public service engagement years ago. Moreover, this researcher's stint in academic magazine, opinion column, and feature article writing in popular media made him realize even more of the critical role of media and information literacy in battling structural ignorance, injustice, and inequality in the broader scale and scope.

Ethical Considerations

The unobtrusive nature of this communication inquiry did not involve any human subject. Due diligence was also exercised by the researcher in studying the policies governing intellectual property rights as well as in consulting specialists and practitioners in the field. Based on his earnest research efforts, it is already considered unnecessary to seek permission from the concerned publishing firms to evaluate and assess their printed academic materials because of the following notable attributes of this research undertaking, namely (1) non-commercial/non-profit in nature (i.e., purely for educational/academic purpose), (2) limited only to a certain portion of the instructional materials (i.e., textbook tasks), (3) transformative (i.e., this academic

endeavor involved analysis and assessment as *value-added* and, in the process, it produced a new research output that did not in any way substitute for the original works), and (4) not detrimental to the publishing firms' current as well as future market. Moreover, it has been stipulated on the existing Intellectual Property Code that criticism, commentary, teaching, scholarly research, and similar purposes are not infringement of copyright and hence are among the legitimate activities that would qualify as *fair use*. The fair use provision is a *countervailing measure* which seeks to balance the welfare of the authors and the public interest by upholding *academic freedom* and *freedom of information* (Pichay 2010: 108-110).

Due diligence was practiced throughout the conduct of research by being circumspect and prudent in the analysis of facts and citation of sources as well as in upholding the best interest of the stakeholders in the media and education sectors.

Data Analysis

Standing both as a framework and a methodology, Fairclough's critical discourse analysis model covers the three interconnected and interdependent dimensions and processes of analysis. Within the context of this critical textbook research, textbook tasks serve as the subject of analysis (i.e., textual analysis), social relations and discursive strategies act as the social practices in question (i.e., process analysis), and the prevailing education and media ecologies as well as the broader development realities represent the socio-historical and socio-structural contexts (i.e., social analysis). In the critical literature review, the exposition began with the discourses on the cultural politics of textbooks as communication artifacts as well as the social

relations in textbook authorships within the context of the wider academic setting. The discussion then proceeded to the perceptive appreciation and critical interpretation of the textbook task section as a constitutive part of the educational praxis where learning activities are potentially acted upon, interrogated, and transformed.

The merit of critical discourse analysis, therefore, rests on the mutually reinforcing three-part analytic dimensions and processes, especially within the context of apprehending "language as communicating social identities, social relations, and systems of knowledge and belief" (Fairclough 1995 as cited in Al Maghlouth 2017: 56).

Research Procedure

With the objective of surfacing and examining the discursive and pedagogical counter-imperatives in designing and developing textbook tasks, this research procedure in communication and media inquiry was systematically adopted.

1. The data gathering process began with the identification of the inclusion and exclusion criteria in choosing the corpus of materials and then went on with the collection and consolidation of the physical copies of the textbooks under review. In particular, the inclusion criteria factored the following considerations, namely (1) curricular alignment, (2) social currency, and (3) publication coverage. The copies were procured from bookshops, book fairs as well as online thrift shops. In addition, the textbooks were also thoroughly inspected to ensure the completeness of pages.

2. Skimming and scanning were conducted before carrying out the close and critical

reading of every task and learning activity in the lineup of instructional materials under evaluation. Reading and re-reading were undertaken to gain deep familiarity with the data and facilitate the process of discovering and surfacing the embodied media education approaches, social discourses, and pedagogical values. This allowed the researcher to uncover and map the recurring ideological, discursive, and pedagogical patterns from the relevant and related topics, questions, and instructions in the corpus of materials covered in the critical textbook analysis. The textbook tasks with similarities in terms of discursive and pedagogical approaches were coded and clustered into themes and subthemes for analysis and interpretation. Both patterns of consistencies and disjunctions were identified, coded, thematized, and examined. Consistent with the iterative nature of qualitative data analysis approach, the researchers need to "work back and forth between the themes and the database" to exhaust the observable patterns of categories and connections as well as generate meaningful and analytical concepts and abstractions (Creswell 2009: 175).

3. The researcher also inputted his critico-analytic commentaries as the patterns emerged during the entire process of data extraction, coding, and categorizing. The textual and process analysis covered the (1) portion of the preface that describes the textbook task sections and subsections, (2) prelude to each textbook task, (3) textbook task proper (i.e., questions and instructions), and (4) the authors' bionote.

4. In examining instructional materials, it is crucial to understand how the texts are being employed in attempting to influence and mediate learning and how learners are

also being socially, ideologically, and discursively positioned presently as students as well as in their future professional and social roles in the community and/or organization (i.e., *role allocation*). This was analyzed by looking at the specific roles that the textbook tasks assigned the students to perform and enact, thereby also revealing if these learning activities are promotive of or impediment to public sphere pedagogy and social justice education. The researcher also paid careful attention to the *lexical choices* and other *signifiers* being used by the academic authors in instantiating and interposing the prescribed social roles through the textbook tasks.

5. This communication inquiry also examined the social and sectoral issues covered by the textbook tasks and the strategies employed by the academic authors in interposing various courses of action and means of intervention to deal with and confront these development and policy issues in question. In particular, the researcher identified and listed the long-standing and emerging social and sectoral issues in media and public affairs during the publication of the instructional materials to determine which have been thoroughly encompassed, partly covered, and completely left out as subjects of analysis in the textbook tasks and learning activities. This is deemed necessary to ensure the applicability, timeliness, and groundedness of the instructional materials in the global and local contemporary realities as well as apprehend the socio-historical condition surrounding the textbook task production.

6. The unpacking and analysis of the textbook tasks was carried out with specific focus on each individual task in question and in relation to the other tasks within a particular

textbook as well as in comparison with other textbook tasks from the rest of the textbook titles under review. After generating the categories and positioning these observed categories in relation to the research frameworks and objectives, the researcher then developed a narrative using the *critical tale* based on the perceptive apprehension of the dialectical "interconnections of these categories" (Creswell 2009).

7. Mapping was also adopted to aid the researcher in the visual presentation of the patterns and relationships of the discursive and pedagogical counter-imperatives that emerged from the collated and analyzed data. It also helped the researcher in plotting the extent and ascertaining the diversity by which the textbook tasks required the students to engage with actual individuals, institutions, and places.

Table 2: Media and Information Literacy textbooks for review

Title	Author	Publisher	Year of Publication
Media and Information Literacy: Empower the Discerning Audiences	JRG Alagaran II	Abiva	2019
Media and Information Literacy	OL Cantor	Vibal	2019
From Cave to Cloud: Media and Information Literacy for Today	PF Campos	Phoenix Publishing House	2016
Media and Information Literacy	BC Liquigan	DIWA	2016
Media and Information Literacy: Enhancing Education through Effective Communication	CM Magpile	The Inteligente Publishing, Inc.	2016
Media and Information Literacy: Being a B.E.S.T. Digital Citizen for Senior High School	JC Yuvienco	C&E Publishing, Inc.	2017
Media and Information Literacy	M Zarate	Rex Book Store	2016

Chapter IV

CRITICAL TEXTBOOK TASK ANALYSIS

"It is not uncommon for textbooks on language to have sections on the relationship 'between' language and society, as if these were two independent entities which just happen to come into contact occasionally. My view is that there is not an external relationship 'between' language and society but an internal dialectical relationship."
– Normal Fairclough

This communication research sought to critically examine the potential of Media and Information Literacy (MIL) textbook tasks in embodying the empowering, transformative, and mutually reinforcing attributes of civic intentionality, critical place-based pedagogy, and critical praxis. The particular attributes and elements were systematically identified, described, and interpreted by looking closely at the discursive and pedagogical counter-imperatives that are circumscribed in the covered instructional materials' tasks and learning activities.

Towards this end, the critical tradition was employed as a guiding paradigm in problematizing the mainstream social discourses and pedagogical values and in confronting the misplaced notions and received truths about media, education, and society. Correspondingly, critical textbook task analysis enabled the researcher to reveal and examine the ideologies, discourses and pedagogies and render them as legitimate subjects for *critical adoption* and/or *critical transformation*.

Three-dimensional Analytic Framework and Approach

The strength of critical discourse analysis (CDA) rests on its analytical coherence in defining and examining the complex and dialectical relationships between the text (i.e., textbook tasks), discussive processes (i.e., production and social relation), and the social context (i.e., education sector, media environment, and the broader development ecology). Critical discourse analysis also proceeds from the basic premise that the *methodology draws heavily from the theory* and, as such, it functions coherently both as

a theoretical stance and a methodological approach.

Another strong attribute of this theory and method of analysis is its committed stance in surfacing and privileging the *alternative voices* and *values* that are underrepresented and/or entirely missing in the mainstream text (i.e., word) and context (i.e., social world). It is likewise instrumental in unpacking and challenging social misrepresentations, erasures, and distortions that further marginalize the hitherto socially disadvantaged (i.e., the cash poor, asset poor, and information poor) on the one hand and privilege the already socially powerful (i.e., the financial elite, economic elite, and information elite) on the other.

In-betweens and Unseen Connections

Discourses provide the social and linguistic bases in critically apprehending and making sense of the "in-between areas of how overarching and long-lasting ideologies become part of daily practices" (Branston & Stafford 2010: 172). The context-dependent, communicative, and purposive nature of discourses also allowed the researcher to reveal the ideologies that underpin the patterns of messages and meanings across the texts under review, thus enabling him to surface and examine the "transparent" as well as the "opaque" structural connections between the discursive biases, pedagogical values, and task designs (Wodak 2006).

Within the context of this study, critical discourse analysis also enabled the researcher to reveal even the not readily observable patterns and relationships between the text, the discursive practice, and the broader social context of the textbook as a political and communication artifact. This unpacking of overt and covert connections is

rendered possible through the multilevel approaches of critical text analysis, critical process analysis, and critical social analysis. It is, therefore, virtually impossible to divorce the text from the societal context of its emergence and the constitutive processes involved in its production.

Critical discourse analysis is based on the critical language theory's fundamental assumption that language use is essentially a "form of social practice" and that "all social practices are tied to specific historical contexts" (Janks 1997). For critical discourse analysts, language is *not* a neutral device since it is imbued with power and values and, in this system of valuation, the use and interpretation of language becomes transformed into a process of overt and/or covert contestations.

By and large, these three levels of analysis reflect and reinforce each other in making critical sense of textbook task formulation as a *politico-communicative act*. Through this multidimensional analytic tool, the researcher was able to transcendingly examine the ideologies, discourses, values, voices, representations, mediations, modalities, and pedagogies, and their complex interplay when *weaved* and *imbricated* by the author-scholars in the prescribed textbook tasks and learning activities.

In doing critical discourse analysis, the following salient questions are sought to be answered: "How is the text positioned? Whose interests are served by this positioning? Whose interests are negated? What are the consequences of this positioning?" (Janks 1997). Through these critical inquiries, knowledge and language are exposed as *purposive* and hence can be conceived and employed to promote or challenge a particular reasoning, standpoint, or value judgment. As such, knowledge and language are social constructions that can be instrumentalized as a *dual tactic* of (1) privileging a

particular social quarter by legitimizing its entrenched agenda while, at the same time, (2) undermining the "othered" by placing them in a subordinate position and invalidating their collective struggles and aspirations.

A. Textual Analysis

Textual analysis is a method that describes and interprets the message of the document either from the perspective of the producer, consumer, or independent evaluator. In this dimension and level of analysis, the focus is on the *content, structure,* and *function* of the text. In relation to the other levels of analysis, the critical examination of the text only becomes meaningful when apprehended within the context of the structural realities and the discursive practices involved.

Input-Process-Output Structure (and Stricture)

When it comes to culminating activities and summative assessments, the instructions provided in the textbook tasks are typically rendered in the input, process, and output (IPO) pattern (see table 3). Given this structure, the input pertains to the set of skills, information, equipment, and other resources needed to get the tasks done. The process refers to the step-by-step procedures (e.g., whether *directed* or *guided inquiry*) laid down by the academic authors in their instructions as well as the interactions that are involved in carrying out the tasks. The output concerns the expected end-product that must be turned in by the students and that are also in very few instances required to be compiled in a portfolio (Liquigan 2016, Yuvienco 2017). While this pedagogical approach is helpful in teaching and learning, it can still be further

enhanced by making productive use of the previous output as *new input* for other related tasks. This learning practice will promote the *culture of knowledge sharing* and *knowledge reuse* among the community of learners. To illustrate, the seminar proceedings, photo essay, and letter of sympathy as final outputs from a previous set of tasks can then serve as inputs in a subsequent set of learning activities, e.g., community mobilization, community exhibit, and open mic letter reading, respectively.

Table 3: Examples of tasks with IPO pattern

Task	Input	Process	Output	Source and Author
Media and Information Literacy (MIL) seminar	Media text analysis model provided by the textbook, sample media texts, board, writing instruments, LCD projector	Deciding which audience to target Coordinating with concerned authorities Designing the MIL seminar Facilitating the seminar	Documentation and synthesis of the media text analysis	Zarate 2016: 35-36
Photo essay	Digital camera (DSLR, smartphone, small digital camera), self-reflective questions	Brainstorming with the partner and teacher regarding the concept Applying the ethical standard in carrying out the project Participating in the sharing session based on the self-reflective questions	Photo essay (7-20 entries) Project notes based on the field experience and sharing sessions	Cantor 2019: 265-266
Letter of sympathy to the surviving	Reading task: Rappler's *Never Again* article	Studying the assigned reading material	Letter of sympathy	Magpile 2016: 72

families of the victims of Martial Law atrocities		Drafting the letter of sympathy in solidarity with the families in "seeking justice and fighting for human rights"	Answer to the guide questions	

Close-ended and What-type Questions

In the 2020 Andersson-Bakken, Jegstad, and Bakken study, textbook tasks were categorized as either *closed tasks* (e.g., repetition of facts and application of standard rules or procedures) or *open tasks* (e.g., critical interpretation, critical reflection, and creative expression). Closed tasks conventionally have one standard answer while open tasks can be answered in *diverse* and *divergent* ways.

Closed tasks are divided into *reproducing* and *reasoning* subcategories. Reproducing tasks ask students to repeat the answer already provided by the textbook or in other available academic resources while reasoning tasks require the students to arrive at the answer by applying the knowledge derived from the textbook or by following the standard procedure already presented and laid down in the learning material (Bakken & Andersson-Bakken 2021).

According to assessment specialist Brenda Corpuz (2003: 111-112), the types of question differ mainly in terms of the objectives for asking and among these are "assessing cognition, means of verification, creative thinking, evaluation, productive thinking, motivation, and instruction" – all of which are in one way or another associated with formal education's traditionally *didactic* nature.

In the twentieth century, textbooks served the role of facilitating the "didactic transfer of knowledge through memorization and repetition" (Sammler 2018). Despite the shift in education paradigm and the evolving role of textbooks in teaching and learning, such pedagogical approach and technique continue to be observed in the instructional materials development up to the present. Through the decades, both teachers and learners have been accustomed to the tradition of plain memory recall. Associated with this orthodox method of information acquisition is the notion of equating learning to traditional and outdated forms of knowledge assessment. Given the advanced level of academic discourse and engagement expected from Senior High School students (i.e., Grades 11 and 12), this approach in conceptualizing textbooks tasks that only continues the conventional and counterproductive practices in learning, i.e., "banking model", simple memory recall, and repetition, must therefore be challenged, abandoned, and transformed.

Favorably, the *close-ended* or *what-type questions* appear only in very few textbook tasks covered in this study. By and large, this type of question only brings about low-level quality of response from learners since it is based mainly on plain memory recall (i.e., repetition). As a pedagogical device, this bears very little contribution in promoting and enhancing the students' critical thought and evaluative skills.

Divergent and Open-ended Questions

Education specialist Brenda Corpuz (2003) pointed out that questions of high-level, divergent, and open-ended types are crucial in improving the teaching-learning praxis and in the context of this critical communication inquiry such question type corresponds

well with critical media literacy and pedagogy. Divergent questions allow the students to arrive at various answers and interpretations, enabling them to practice their perceptive and evaluative skills. These why- and how-type of questions are designed to be analytical and probing in character, which are particularly advantageous in sharpening and enhancing the learners' critical perspective and practice. By answering this set of tasks below, for instance, students will apprehend the concept of 'people as media' in the specific socio-historical context of the role of *binukot* as preserver of family and community memories in Filipino indigenous societies. This task can be further developed to allow the learners make sense of the indigenous concept of boredom and nostalgia in relation to, say, the contemporary urban context and experience.

> *Think about boredom. In what form do you think could boredom be understood in the time of the 'binukot', if people then were ever bored at all?* (Campos 2016: 14)

> *Think about nostalgia. In what form do you think could nostalgia for the past be understood in the time of the 'binukot', if people then were ever nostalgic about something?* (Campos 2016: 14)

In relation to learning assessment as a pedagogical tool, Bakken and Andersson-Bakken (2021) presented that the *open textbook tasks* are further divided into subcategories, namely: *evaluative, explorative,* and *activating tasks*. Evaluative tasks require the students to assess, reflect, interpret, and take a position. Explorative tasks instruct the students to delve deeper into the given topic by doing literature review or conducting research. Lastly, activating tasks ask the learners to perform specific actions with the objective of developing a prescribed competency or set of

competencies. When taken altogether, these three subcategories play a huge potential in enhancing the knowledge management praxis of media and information literacy.

Monologic and Dialogic Discourse

In terms of discursive structure, the textbook tasks conceptualized by the academic authors may either be categorized as *monologic* or *dialogic discourse*. The discourse may be classified as monologic if the text is "authoritative" or dialogic when the meaning is "negotiated" (Bahktin 1986 as cited in O'Connor & Michaels 2007). Viewed as a "transmission device", the monologic discourse functions to create a homogenous learning experience for the students vis-à-vis the dialogic discourse that acts as a "thinking device", allowing the creation of new and divergent meanings and encounters (Lotman 1988 as cited in O'Connor & Michaels 2007). Within the context of this qualitative media inquiry, the monologic tendencies of some textbook tasks can be effectively reconfigured to become dialogic in orientation by allowing the learners to engage with their co-learners within the class/campus/community and by carrying this out through the dynamic and dialectical process of discovery, deliberation, and debate. Divergent meanings and interpretations can only be possible if the textbook tasks provide the learners with the opportunities to explore and examine the issues from various perspectives and positions. In this community dialogue task featured below, for instance, democratic representation in terms of *industry, gender,* and *ethnicity* is earnestly sought and invoked. The same is true with the subsequent set of probing questions pertaining to a news story about peasant poverty with the main interviewee arguing contentiously that it is generally attributable to "lack of family planning".

> *Initiate a community dialogue. Organize a panel discussion with media players and actors. The idea is to hear the situation from media industry players and actors themselves. The ideal composite panel will have representations from various media industries: from small to big companies, and from print, broadcast, and web-based industries. Build a composite panel where all gender orientations can be represented, and if possible, even other ethnic groups.* (Zarate 2016: 132-133)

> *"Who will identify with this story? Who will agree with this story? Who will disagree?"* (Zarate 2016: 90)

Linguistic Practices and Language Ideologies

Overtly or covertly, language use reveals the individual and institution's politico-ideological orientation. It also mirrors the social situatedness of the speakers, their discursive bias as well as the cultural ecology where the language use is predicated. In various social contexts, for instance, terminologies such as "hard sciences" and "hard news" are being liberally adopted without regard about their discriminatory insinuations in relation to their counterpart concepts, i.e., "soft sciences" and "soft news" and to those individuals and institutions associated with these fields of practice. The operative term "hard" when utilized in relation to "soft" connotes the superiority and pre-eminence of the former to the denigration of the latter. The same could be assumed with the widespread use of the binary terms like "hard skills' vis-à-vis 'soft skills" in the fields of formal education and human resource development.

For the same reason, the "hard news vis-à-vis soft news" classification discriminates against news items generally associated with culture and heritage while being in favor of what are commonly perceived as consequential fields in public affairs such as economy, business, and politics. For critical media scholar Danilo Arao (2022), hard and soft news are "generic categories". However, he maintained that in actual practice,

“hard news like politics would be trivialized and made soft” while “soft news like fashion and showbiz may be discussed critically, giving it hard news treatment” (Arao 2022). In the Philippines, this can be observed in the manner wherein election-related stories are trivialized by mainstream media and how in the case of *Pinoy Weekly*, for instance, the entertainment stories are alternatively and commendably accorded with strong politico-economic slant (e.g., foregrounding the plight of the poor upland farmers in the *teleserye* ‘Forevermore’).

Correspondingly, the “hard science vis-à-vis soft science” dichotomy also involves similar issue, i.e., the condescending insinuation that one (natural and physical sciences in this case) is superior than the other (social sciences in this context). The discursive strategy that normalizes *discriminatory dualism* must therefore be problematized, challenged, and corrected.

Similarly, the use of the term “fake news” is also considered contentious. Media scholar Clarissa David (2018) pointed out that “the really problematic kind of content are the *intentionally deceptive message* which no journalist would classify as news”. The term ‘fake news’, therefore, undermines the very concept of news which as a social construct both *denotes* and *connotes* accuracy and truthfulness. Moreover, “fake news” when adopted as a binary opposite of “real news” stands to diminish public vigilance and skepticism when evaluating the latter in terms of its “accuracy, fairness, and objectivity” (Buckingham 2019: 92). The qualifier “fake” of the former may create the misplaced assumption that “real news” is beyond reproach or above suspicion.

Fairclough (1989) as cited in Mesthrie et al. (2007: 327) argued that media discourse is a “form of hidden power, for the favored interpretations and wordings are those of the

power holders in our society". For instance, the widespread acceptance and adoption of the dominant language ideology despite its discriminatory, marginalizing, and oppressive tendencies is illustrative of ideology's *discursive power* as well as discourse's *ideological power*. More specifically, this "hidden power" is also reflected in the manner how the public honor and value textbook as a cultural and intellectual product written by subject area specialists and as an official text sanctioned by education authorities. As underscored by critical discourse analysts, it is in the attribute or condition of being "hidden" (i.e., opaque) that ideology becomes most *powerful, penetrating*, and *perpetuating* (Wodak 2006, Janks 1997).

While there is a legitimate need to understand how media audience are categorized or segmented, it is equally important to pay critical attention to the way this classification is conceptualized, organized, and worded. In an activity by Zarate (2016: 67), the students were asked to "reflect on the words *baduy, jologs,* and *cheap* as words to describe audience preferences". In the Philippine cultural context, *baduy*, *jologs* and *cheap* are used as derogatory remarks that meant lacking in style and sophistication. The follow-up question asking the learners if they "take these words seriously" is commendable because it will allow them to interrogate these categories, especially with respect to their tendencies to promote multiple forms of discrimination such as *class bias*, *cultural prejudice*, and *chronocentrism*.

> *Reflect on the words 'baduy', 'jologs' or 'cheap' as words to describe the audience preference in this time and age. How have you engaged with these words? What counts as 'baduy', 'jologs' or 'cheap' when it comes to consuming media texts?* (Zarate 2016: 67)

> *At any one point in time, did you consider yourselves predisposed to consuming media that may be referred to as 'baduy', 'jologs', or 'cheap'? Do you take these words*

seriously? Why or why not? (Zarate 2016: 67)

'Social' as a Qualifier

The specific task of introducing the students to concepts such as "social computing, social software, and social bookmarking" (Yuvienco 2017: 4) and then asking them to add more to this "social list" is remarkable and commendable. This learning activity will allow the students to contextualize the *technical* and *technological concepts* in relation and as applied to social behaviors, processes, and interactions. From the existing list, the following can be added: social analytics, social signals, social digitalization, big social data, social information system, social internet of things, and social cybersecurity, among others. In fact, from this expanding list, a preliminary glossary can even be started and developed. The practice of socially contextualizing the terminologies from other technical areas (e.g., Chemistry) was earlier observed in the coinage of the terms such as *social entropy* and *social catalyst*, among others. The task in question, however, can still be enhanced by incorporating the *critical perspective* in apprehending the substantive area of information and communication technology (ICT), e.g., *critical social computing, critical social analytics,* and *critical social cybersecurity*. Through this combined discursive and pedagogical counter-imperative, the students will not only be able to adopt and expand the use of the concepts to the social realm but to also make critical sense of the overt and covert power relations and struggles involved.

A thorough review of the tasks across the textbook titles also revealed numerous terminologies being *collocated* with the qualifier "social", namely: "social groups, social media, social media site/app, social good, social awareness, social development, social

issue, social responsibility, social problem, social network, social science, social interest, social lives, social responsibility, social context, social services, social necessity, social forces, social participation, social task, social movement, and social construction of reality" (Alagaran 2019, Liquigan 2016, Zarate 2016, Campos 2016, Cantor 2019, Magpile 2016, and Yuvienco 2017). This points to the immense potential of media and information literacy in contributing to the broadening and deepening of social and sociological analysis, and vice versa.

B. Process Analysis

A textbook task falls under a *formal written discourse* and, as a contested instructional device, it is believed to involve the cognition and value judgment of the academic authors and the other stakeholders in the textbook production. These encompass the complex stages and dimensions of conceptualizing, researching, writing, agenda-setting, framing, priming, editing, and revising. By undergoing these complex discursive processes, it therefore follows that textbook task development is a product of thorough introspection and deliberation and is therefore a purposive and conscious politico-communicative act. Discernibly, the pattern of discursive practices and pedagogical values of the academic authors will be revealed, which in due course may develop into a specific *task culture*.

Writing as a Communicative and Political Act

Writing as a communicative act is a product of the individual's social consciousness and is influenced by the social ecology where the person is situated (i.e., discourse

community, academic community, and broader development community). Writing also heavily involves the person's reason, emotion, and political resolve. For Brazilian progressive educator Paulo Freire (1996), "writing has become a deep pleasure just as it has also become a duty…for it is a *political project* that must be met", arguing further that his own writing is motivated by a deep social and ethical commitment.

He, however, also pointed out that writers are subject to limits that they must be fully conscious of, i.e., "epistemological, economic, social, racial and class" considerations (Freire 1996). Within this context, it can be said therefore that textbook task authors are also influenced by these above-mentioned social variables and parameters. However, instead of being perceived as mere limitations, these identities, subjectivities, and positionalities can also serve as bases of assertion to facilitate contextual learning, deepen social consciousness, and advance structural change. Take note, for instance, how Cantor (2019) as a gender and social justice advocate configured her tasks with strong empowerment agenda and how Zarate (2016) as a Philippine studies scholar and given her basic training in political science consistently rendered the learning activities along the political economy of media framework.

The Authors' Voices and Values

Depending on their specific discourse community of association, the pedagogical and political values which the academic authors seek to mediate, embody and promote are reflected and communicated in (1) what precepts and concepts they want to highlight as frames/subjects of analysis, (2) what insights and ideas they seek to inquire from the students, (3) what themes and lessons they want to broaden and deepen, (4) what tasks they want them to accomplish and learn from, (5) what competencies

they want to develop and assess, (6) what pedagogies and strategies they aim to employ, and, lastly, (7) what influence and impact they endeavor to achieve as educators and curriculum implementors.

In the traditional didactic nature of textbooks, it is the authors' voice that commonly reverberate throughout and that stand to dominate the discourse. However, enlightened and progressive textbook authors may decidedly choose to take the path less trodden and make use of *scholarship* and *public service* (textbook writing being an embodiment of both) as instruments of educational and social change.

The Authors' Position of (Non)innocence

Essentially, textbook tasks are reflections of the authors' consciousness and this individual awareness according to Russian linguist Valentin Volosinov (1929) is a "socio-ideological fact". This assertion is not without basis considering the strong influence of the socio-historical and socio-economic contexts where the authors find themselves in. The assessment portion of the academic text is *never* value-free as it is imbued with the authors' explicit and implicit values as *instructional communicators*.

Textbook tasks mirror the socio-political and socio-pedagogical orientation of the authors. As media producers, they may either be fully or not-fully conscious about this personal and social bias. To illustrate, Rosaldo (1989) as cited in Mitchell (2004) argued that "…*researchers* are necessarily both somewhat impartial and somewhat partisan, somewhat innocent, and somewhat complicit…". Within the context of this study, the *researchers* represent the textbook authors. Despite this perception of ambivalence, the fact remains that these assessment tools reflect and embody what the

academic authors believe as the most salient part of the curriculum and the lessons which must be emphasized, applied, and evaluated. Given this fundamental assumption of political and pedagogical purposiveness, textbook task therefore deserves and requires the same level of attention and scrutiny as the textbooks' main text but from a more nuanced perspective and approach considering its function as an *assessment instrument*.

Fundamentally, textbook assessments reflect the deeply held values and belief systems of the authors as *purposive communicators*. As message encoders, orthodox authors are less likely to discuss contents, formulate tasks, and require reading and viewing materials that counter their own set of values and ideologies as well as the standpoints and tenets of the development and discourse communities which they represent. However, when a mainstream media text, for instance, is instantiated and introduced by a progressive writer, it is customarily adopted for critical textual analysis in its "stronger and politically committed sense" (Wallace 2003 as cited in Kozakowska 2010: 117). The illustrations below point out how prenup photographs, gag shows, and commercial advertisements can be instantiated for *deconstruction* in relation to the contentious issues of cultural insensitivities and social stereotypes. Within this context, it needs to be clarified that the prenup photo shoot was organized and "sponsored by Ethiopian airlines" and "part the country's tourism campaign" (Cantor 2019: 202).

> *Go online and google this search string: Billy Crawford, Coleen Garcia, Ethiopia prenup photo. As foreigners stepping on foreign land, people also called out how culturally insensitive the shoot was, or how it was an example of cultural appropriation. Do you agree with these observations, or do you have other opinion?* (Cantor 2019: 202)

> *View an episode of a gag show in television (e.g., "Banana Split" or "Bubble Gang"). Be mindful of how stereotypes are generated in these sequences.* (Zarate 2016: 102).

> *Watch how the brands, Dove and Always, promote specific views of what beauty means and what it means to be a girl? To what extent would you say do these advertisements depart or question stereotypes and to what extent do they perpetuate stereotypes?* (Campos 2016: 80)

Authors' 'Institutionally Derived Rights'

As education professionals, textbook authors possess "institutionally derived rights" (Bonvillain 2008) that render them influential in defining and shaping the teaching-learning process. These are the same institutionally derived rights enjoyed in varying degrees by curriculum developers in the state's education department as well as by the teachers and trainers in the academic setting. Discernably, this set of institutionally derived rights is an embodiment of *symbolic capital* which is a form of power commonly employed (and deployed) by the intellectual class to assert their pre-eminence and dominance over their supposed academic (or non-academic) audiences or subjects of research. However, when their respective standpoints do not coincide, there is a tendency for the various textbook stakeholders to contradict. This is apparent when authors *creatively diverge* and *purposively deviate* from the state's prescribed curriculum to enrich the content of the instructional materials as well as to render textbook tasks socially relevant and change-oriented. Within the purview of critical pedagogy, this observation about *transgressive textbooks* (i.e., positive deviance) is not at all disagreeable but is, in fact, encouraged to promote diverse discourses and liberating pedagogies.

Authors as Intermediaries

As argued by Csilla Weniger (2020), textbooks fall under the category of a "didactic

genre where learners' engagement with meaning is heavily guided". This pedagogical arrangement is true in generally all parts of the instructional materials, including the textbook tasks and learning activities. Textbook task, therefore, cannot be conceived as an innocent text that is isolated from the social situatedness of the authors as well as the academic and political ecologies where they are active sectoral constituents of. Moreover, the role of authors as intermediaries in the education realm is imbued with social and cultural capital that exert strong influence upon their student-readers and, by extension, to the latter's respective communities as well. Ideally in the political and pedagogical sense, the textbook tasks need to be conceptualized and designed as an empowering exercise to the students who will perform the learning activities as well as to the community which the learners will be engaging with as *co-equal*. The reflective and community-oriented formulation of the textbook task instruction is therefore crucial in achieving these parallel counter-discursive and counter-pedagogical ends.

The inhibiting nature of mainstream pedagogy provides the students with very limited opportunity to shape and determine their own learning process. This pertains to the tasks with very restrictive instructions leaving no room for student creativity and initiative.

Essentially, learning also depends heavily on the instructional design adopted by the textbook author. In *directed inquiry*, the learners rigidly follow the detailed procedure and guide questions laid down by the textbook task. Under *guided inquiry*, learners are afforded the opportunity to formulate the process (or part/s of the process) to carry out the task. Through *open inquiry*, the learners independently conceptualize the specific objectives, develop the detailed procedures, and formulate the particular questions

based on the textbook task's general instruction and orientation. The roles of the teachers and students across these three levels of inquiry, therefore, vary significantly in terms of extent and influence.

Textbooks' Complexity and Fluidity

Ben-Peretz (1975) and Deng (2015) as cited in Bakken and Andersson-Bakken (2021) posited that textbooks are not merely "fixed intentions of the developers" as these instructional materials are also subject to the variability of interpretation and adoption of the teachers given the nuances of their respective classes and contexts. While such may be true in some instances, this exercise of autonomy and agency is still heavily dependent on the level of flexibility that the textbook authors expend and allow in designing and developing the textbook tasks. By affording the teachers and the students the freedom to exercise flexibility in choosing, modifying, adopting, and carrying out the tasks, they will be able to experience a learning culture that encourages contextualization and localization as well as engenders democratic literacy and academic freedom. In the case of the task by Cantor (2019), she even enjoined the students to carry out their own instructional assessment. She also provided a wide array of topics for the students to choose from in the assigned photo essay, narrative film, and documentary film tasks. Zarate (2016), for her part, also afforded the students to decide on the extent of the seminar-workshop in terms of the sectoral composition of the audience and their level of participation.

> *Do a <u>self-assessment</u> of your work (news story).* (Cantor 2019: 109)
>
> *Decide as a class on the <u>extent of community activity</u> that you will initiate. How do you*

ensure their participation *so that you can successfully carry out this gathering?* (Zarate 2016: 57)

(Non)reciprocal Relationship

In the history of textbook production, the default relationship between the textbook authors and their student-readers as demonstrated in the traditionally didactic structure and pedantic nature of textbook tasks can be interpreted as *non-reciprocal*. In this socio-pedagogical arrangement, student-readers cannot provide direct feedback regarding their learning experience with the textbooks and, by extension, the textbook tasks. If ever, the feedback mechanism may only be coursed through their teachers whose perspective and presentation may not truly represent the learners' viewpoints, sentiments, and aspirations. Within this context, it is incumbent that a direct feedback mechanism is formally and systematically established to enable the students to communicate their legitimate concerns as end-users and primary stakeholders.

As textbook users, students perform the role of being media consumers and, by being afforded the opportunity to provide feedbacks, they will be able to exercise their collective autonomy, efficacy, and agency. While the textbook pages normally contain the companies' respective contact details such as the national and/or provincial office addresses, websites, telephone numbers, telefax numbers, and e-mail addresses, it is necessary to explicitly indicate that these means of communication can also be utilized to send stakeholder feedbacks and comments. In this age of digital media, social networking sites must also be employed and maximized for this purpose. Essentially, such political exercise of *student* and *consumer rights* must be understood and recognized as an application and concretization of critical media and information

literacy.

Authors' Prudence and Mindfulness

In her own experience with textbook writing, cultural theorist Angela McRobbie (2005) underscored the importance of *thoughtfulness* in consideration of the "students who one hopes will read the book". Another expression of this thoughtfulness/mindfulness is also in consideration of the "role of the teacher…looking for ways to enlarge upon the curriculum, and to provide students with the means by which they can pursue particular interests in more depth" (McRobbie 2005). This is consistent with the expanding and deepening roles of education which textbook tasks can potentially fulfill and enact. In specific terms, this can be realized through the opening-up and extension of the learning contexts and experiences beyond the classroom to encompass the campus, locality, and the broader development community. This then will make textbook tasks not only a "surrogate curriculum" but also an "embodied curriculum". According to UNESCO (2013), a *surrogate curriculum* is a potentially enacted curriculum (i.e., bridge between the 'intended curriculum' and the 'implemented curriculum') while, according to Christodoulou (2010), an *embodied curriculum* is the "curriculum that takes form and shape in the experiences of the people and that becomes part of their lived experience".

This pedagogical commitment will allow textbook tasks to become relevant and rooted to the contextual experiences and living encounters of the learners and their interlocutors.

Profile of the Textbooks and the Textbook Authors

The commercial mass production of MIL textbooks was in response to the pressing need to provide instructional materials for Media and Information Literacy which is one of the core subjects under the Philippine Senior High School curriculum. The intended readers are Grades 11 and 12 who are believed to be *digital natives* and are therefore massive consumers and producers of media content. The period of textbook production covered by this study is from 2016 to 2019 and this duration in our contemporary history saw the following social and sectoral issues dominating the news headlines: political and bureaucratic corruption, West Philippine Sea territorial dispute, secessionism, dengue outbreak, El Niño, national and local elections, electoral protests, peace talks, extrajudicial killings, illegal gambling, TRAIN law, terror attack, and militarization, among others.

Generally, the textbooks were authored by educators and scholars who are based in Luzon and with most of their student-readers coming from private academic institutions in various regions of the country. All textbook titles under consideration were produced by sole authorship, allowing the identification of each author's media education approach, discursive bias, and pedagogical values less complicated than group authorship. The firms represent the top publishing houses in the country and are generally based in the National Capital Region, with most of them also operating through their regional and provincial branches.

Most of the authors are affiliated with universities and colleges as educators, handling courses in Communication, English, Media Studies, and/or Film Studies, among others. In varying degrees, the University of the Philippines background of all

the featured authors appeared to have contributed to the social grounding of the textbook task conceptualization in terms of discursive orientation and pedagogical approach. Most of the authors have also obtained advanced degrees in Communication, Broadcast Communication, and Media Studies, with two of them holding doctoral degrees (i.e., Dr. Alagaran and Dr. Zarate) as of this writing.

The authors' undergraduate degrees encompass various fields, namely communication, journalism, political science, and statistics. This set of academic qualification is considered valuable given the inherently interdisciplinary attribute of media and information literacy. Two of the seven authors (i.e., Magpile and Liquigan) also possess formal training in education and professional teaching. To a great extent, the authors' academic background influenced the content and pedagogy of the textbook tasks and learning activities. Based on online search using different research databases, some authors also engage in scholarly research in varying fields of inquiry and levels of productivity.

Most of the featured authors are also active in communication and media professional organizations such as Philippine Association of Communication Educators (PACE), Philippine Communication Society (PCS), and Philippine Association for Media and Information Literacy (PAMIL), to name a few. These professional affiliations are crucial in updating content and improving the craft of media and communication education scholarship and practice.

Observably, the authors with previous background in broadcast media, specifically in major television networks, make productive use of these media outfits' content as case studies for media text analysis in both or either of the technico-functional and/or critico-

evaluative dimension(s) such as in the case of Liquigan (2016), Zarate (2016), and Cantor (2019).

JRG Alagaran (MIL: Empower the Discerning Audience, 2019)

Alagaran's engagement with UNESCO as a consultant on media and information literacy has considerably shaped the framework which guided the writing of the textbook and, by extension, the formulation of the textbook tasks. Discernably, Alagaran belongs to the *media literacy movement* based on Kellner and Share's (2007) typology of media education approaches given his strong emphasis on the composite set of skills and competencies in media and information literacy. As a media scholar, Alagaran (2019: 22-23) adopts the triple E of Media and Information Literacy model which he himself originally developed. In this model, Alagaran (2019: 22-23) views the set of media and information literacy competencies being classified into three areas of application, i.e., *explore* ("identify, access, and retrieve information and media skillfully"), *engage* ("analyze and evaluate media and information critically"), and *empower* (e.g., "create or produce, share or communicate, and use information and media content ethically, safely and responsibly for decision-making and taking-action").

PF Campos (From Cave to Cloud: Media and Information Literacy Today, 2016)

Film studies scholar PF Campos mainstreamed film and society as cases and contexts in the numerous media text analyses in his textbook tasks and learning activities. As a pedagogical approach, the film was employed as a learning tool to critically apprehend the situated knowledge and the complex process of social change

in specific local communities with diverse socio-historical contexts. Campos' textbook tasks also possess very strong socio-philosophical character considering the depth and profoundness of his reflection questions. For Campos (2016), his textbook is "meant to distract the learner from complacent and unthinking use of media and information", which essentially is what *critical media literacy* as a transformative social praxis must aim for and accomplish. The textbooks title "From Cave to Cloud" also reflects the author's deep interest in historical analysis and this is also shown in his other scholarly engagements, i.e., teaching history of Philippine and world cinema. Ultimately, Campos (2016) envisions his instructional material to contribute in "developing media and information literacy as a personal and social pursuit".

OL Cantor (Media and Information Literacy, 2019)

The background of Cantor as a media practitioner in various media platforms contributed to the rendering of textbook tasks in a broad range of media formats and contexts. In addition, Cantor's engagement with feminist non-governmental organizations has also strongly influenced the gender-oriented advocacy that characterized most of her case studies. As concretization of gender justice in the textbook tasks, Cantor (2019) foregrounded for analysis various forms of discrimination and stereotype being experienced by individuals from different sexual orientations and gender identities in the gender spectrum, i.e., women (pp. 206, 228, 230, 231, 248, 249), gays (p. 225), lesbians (p. 217), and men (pp. 211-212). Consistent with her social advocacy in the diverse but interconnected areas of "cultural journalism, gender sensitivity, LGBTQ rights, children's educational media, advocacy filmmaking, and

media literacy", Cantor conceived the formulation of the textbook tasks to reflect this strong social justice and sectoral orientation. In terms of media education approach, the compelling gender and human rights dimension of Cantor's pedagogy aligns squarely with *critical media literacy*.

BC Liquigan (Media and Information Literacy, 2016)

Apart from his scholarly background, Liquigan also served as a practitioner in the media industry working before as a news writer and producer as well as serving as a magazine and online content writer. Liquigan's (2016) fields of academic interest include "communication/media theory and literacy, communication research, media law and ethics, broadcasting and journalism principles, popular culture and language". This broad range of substantive areas is also reflected in the themes and subthemes of the textbook tasks and learning activities of his instructional material. His previous experience as a content creator is also manifested in the myriad of roles that he required the students to enact and perform in the assigned exercises. This set of attributes corresponds well with the *media literacy movement* considering the multiple literacies which his instantiated tasks seek to develop among the students.

CM Magpile (MIL: Enhancing Education through Effective Communication, 2016)

The basic training of Magpile in teacher education majoring in history proved to be very influential in mainstreaming socio-historical issues such as Martial Law in her textbook task conceptualization. Her background in religious education as well as in

school guidance and counseling are also crucial in embedding the *values perspective* in media and information literacy. This is particularly advantageous in underscoring the *socio-ethical* dimension of the subject area. Her inclination in the arts and humanities is likewise strongly reflected in the wide range of creative learning activities in the textbook tasks (i.e., poster making, letter writing, skit performance, storytelling, flyer making, biography writing, documentary filming, interpretative dancing, book review, food review, book cover designing, art demonstration, radio drama adaptation, among others). Magpile views the textbook tasks in each lesson as means to "measure the students' learning abilities" and to "gauge their understanding and insight about media and information literacy". In consonance with the multiple intelligences theory, she also seeks to "give the students the opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills by creating samples of different media platforms" and, as such, this pedagogy correspondingly aligns well with the *media literacy movement* coupled with her trademark values orientation.

JC Yuvienco (MIL: Being a B.E.S.T. Digital Citizen for Senior High School, 2017)

As a knowledge management consultant, Yuvienco holds an academic degree in statistics and business administration and this complementary background manifests strongly in his textbook tasks, especially on topics pertaining to digitization and emerging technologies. Believing that "information and communication technology is a potent tool to bridge cultural/generational divides", Yuvienco's (2017) tasks reflect the need to study and document *indigenous knowledge* and *indigenous media* as a strategy

in promoting cultural heritage preservation and management. Yuvienco's approach also gives central importance to the technological dimension of media literacy education as reflected in his strong interest on e-learning, innovative education, and instructional technology. Based on Kellner and Share's (2007) typology of media education approaches, Yuvienco's instructional material can be classified along *media arts education approach* considering the compelling creative, aesthetic, and technical emphasis of the textbook tasks as well as the *media literacy movement approach* given his focus on the MIL composite set of competencies. Yuvienco also organized the textbook structure using the Build, Engage, Sustain, and Transform (BEST) framework with its components operating along the *inquiry-based instructional approaches* that employ problem-solving, case analysis, and experiential learning to promote active student involvement and engagement.

MJE Zarate (Media and Information Literacy, 2016)

As a media scholar, Zarate possesses a strong interdisciplinary background given her formal training in Political Science, Philippine Literature, and Philippine Studies from her baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral education, respectively. This academic orientation has profoundly influenced how she crafted the textbook tasks that encompassed a broad range of pressing development issues and debates. As a media practitioner, she worked as the head writer of top-rated educational programs in a major television network and this familiarity with the broadcast media ecology served her well in critically introducing and mainstreaming the 'political economy of media' and 'media as business' perspectives.

Zarate's Media and Information Literacy textbook is structured based on the Center for Media Literacy's five core principles, namely: (1) social construction of media messages, (2) rule-governed use of creative language in constructing media messages, (3) varying reception of different people to the same media message, (4) values and viewpoints embedded in media, and (5) profit/power as the bottom line of most media content. According to Zarate, this set of principles must coherently govern the critical apprehension of media production, media consumption, and media influence.

Consistent with the critical tradition, Zarate also invoked in her preface discourse analyst Teun van Dijk's definition of *social power* as the unequal political arrangement governing the relationship between groups that involved the control of thought and action of the less powerful by the more powerful counterpart. Correspondingly, Zarate (2016) underscored that in the course design the "strong connections of media and society, specifically to its power structures" must serve as the framework in guiding the learning and investigation process. In this way, students will be able to develop a critical understanding of how the unequal power relations come into play "from media institutions to big businesses, and even political blocs" (Zarate 2016). This runs parallel with the Center for Media Literacy's fifth core construct about the centrality of economic and political dimensions when producing, distributing, and consuming media content.

Discourse Community

This qualitative textbook research adopted the concept of *discourse community* defined by linguist John Swales (1990) as a collectivity of individuals with a shared set of discourses understood and communicated as a coherent set of identities,

subjectivities, values, goals, practices, genres, and language styles. Within this parameter, terminologies and jargons also form part of what make up a discourse community. For instance, the academic sector where the textbook writers in the field of media and communication belong would constitute as a distinct discourse community. It can be assumed that in a specific discourse community there are also *subcultures* within them, i.e., *discourse sub-communities* (e.g., mainstream media studies vis-à-vis critical media studies, media arts education vis-à-vis critical media literacy, among others). The process of critically making sense of discourse communities and subcommunities enabled the researcher to surface the media education approaches that the academic authors employed in conceptualizing textbook tasks.

Textbook Production and Distribution Process

Media and information literacy textbooks are produced mainly by private commercial publishing firms. Within this setup, textbook authors are privately commissioned by publishing houses to work on a particular subject area intended for a specific grade/year level. As content specialist, they are assigned to produce the manuscripts guided by the education department's curriculum guide (CG) as well as the publishing firm's in-house production and editorial policies. Within this context, the decision of what media education approach to adopt by the academic authors is conceived to be influenced by the interplay of micro, meso, and macro factors.

Being subject area experts, the academic authors are usually accorded relative autonomy to interpret the education department's prescribed curriculum and to determine the textbook content based on their informed judgment. Unless the

publishing firm sets the required structure and design, the decision as to what type, format, and sequence of the textbook tasks to adopt is conventionally left to the authors' discretion. The layout and design, however, is typically decided upon by the publishing firm to ensure consistency with the organization's branding across its product line. Even if the textbook company requires a particular structure and format, the conceptualization of textbook tasks in terms of the substantive dimension remains practically the sole prerogative of the textbook writers as academic authorities. A subject coordinator and/or an academic consultant, however, may also take part in the publication process. Nevertheless, the writer usually retains the authority and enjoys relative autonomy in determining the content in terms of coverage (i.e., breadth), focus (i.e., depth) as well as the sequence (i.e., chronology), provided that the author follows the education department's curriculum guide. The complex process of instructional materials development therefore is a product of a confluence of factors that influences the author's subject position as curriculum implementor, media producer, and instructional communicator.

With respect to textbook use, students only get to procure a copy when it becomes officially adopted by the school authorities as academic reference. Normally, the adoption is a process of consultation with subject area teachers/department head and/or decided upon by the school's central administration. Within this arrangement, students are then conceived merely as the textbook industry's *captive market* and the textbook's *captive audience.* As passive stakeholders, they cannot choose freely since school authorities decide mainly on matters pertaining to instructional materials selection and procurement.

Meanwhile, schools which do not adopt an official textbook as instructional reference for media and information literacy allow the classroom teachers to draw instead from a variety of available academic references (i.e., local and/or foreign textbooks, handbooks, audio-visual materials, online resources, among others). However, schools that adopt official textbooks in their classes also use the above-enumerated academic references as complementary and enrichment materials.

Content- and pedagogy-wise, the textbook authors are afforded with varying levels of flexibility in designing and developing the instructional materials. This is vividly manifested in the observable variety in textbook tasks in terms of thrust, content, and format. For instance, Yuvienco (2017) provided the learners with a consistent training in the application of the *technological* and *technical* aspects of media and information literacy education by employing various media platforms. Alagaran (2019) approached learning with a strong *home* and *school* contextual applications and with the use of the composite set of competencies in media and information literacy. Liquigan (2016) introduced a wide range of themes, texts, and tasks that manifest his *pluralist* orientation. Magpile (2016) instantiated various tasks and learning activities that centered on the analysis and application of *media, communication,* and *information ethics*. Cantor (2019) centered on *media text analysis*, mainly about popular culture and strategically employing gender and human rights perspectives. Campos (2016) provided a strong *historical* and *philosophical* dimension in his predominantly self-reflective tasks. Zarate (2016) conceptualized the textbook tasks with the aim of promoting “active citizenship engagement” and situating learning in the context of social and sectoral issues “derived from the local scene”.

C. Contextual Analysis

Macro-institutional Context

Institutions are governed by social norms where “roles are distributed and interactions are managed in terms of pre-assigned rights and constraints” (Bonvillain 2008). This socio-institutional arrangement brings about a kind of “technocratic consciousness” that influences people’s perspective and guides their “purposive-rational action” (Habermas as cited in Bonvillain 2008). Eventually, this set of norms becomes *crystallized* and *codified*, thereby forming part of the frameworks, policies, and processes that govern and direct individuals and institutions’ functions and behaviors. Generally, in the context of textbook production and use, this pattern can be observed in the processes of formulating (author and/or coordinator), writing (author and/or coordinator), refining/revising (author, coordinator, and editor), adopting (classroom teachers and students) as well as in answering and carrying out the textbook tasks (classroom teachers, students, and their interlocutors). However, this aforementioned set of conventions may be challenged and over time undergo structural and institutional change to accommodate major or minor shifts in perspectives, pedagogies, and policies.

The Triple Bottom-Line

By and large, the production of textbook as an *instructional media* is situated within the context of a business practice where profit remains to be the be-all and end-all.

However, this is not to discount the fact that some textbook publishing firms also practice corporate social responsibility (CSR) where apart from economic and financial considerations, these business organizations also uphold social justice principles and observe ethical standards. Ideally, the application of corporate social responsibility in the publishing industry must be coherently embodied in the organizational commitment to produce high-quality, values-oriented, and socially relevant instructional materials. This goes without saying that in striving to become socially responsible, the *core function* of producing academic materials needs to be deeply committed to *professional* and *product excellence* and central to this objective is publishing factual, credible, and relevant instructional resources.

New Social Movements

Cultural products such as textbooks are not immune and are therefore also influenced by the shifting patterns in the politico-ideological configurations of the broader development domain. For instance, the increasing prominence of the *new social movement* (NSM) had profound implications to the class-based interpretation and analysis of social contradictions. By and large, the aspirations of the new social movement center on the non-material dimensions of the social struggle (i.e., politics of identity, politics of recognition, politics of autonomy), with gender and cultural activism as common expressions and embodiments. This differs sharply from the economic-oriented (i.e., class-based) character of traditional social movements (TSM) such as labor unions and peasant movements. Typically, new social movements have stronger appeal to the middle- and upper-classes of the society, hence the tendency of crowding

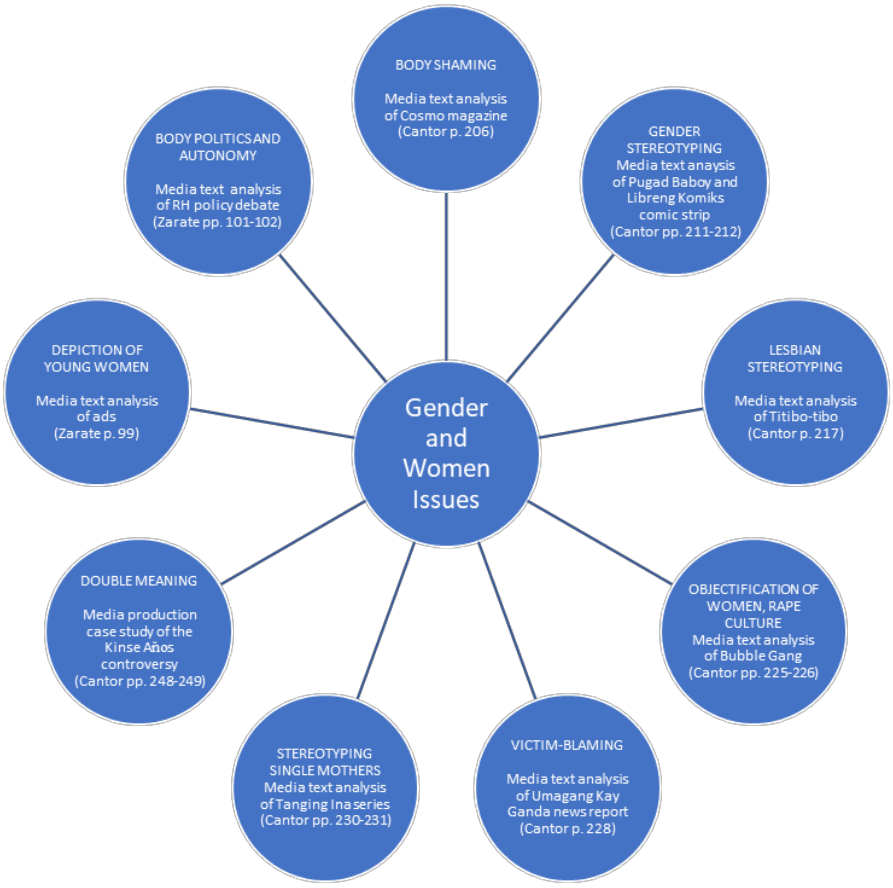
out or eclipsing the legitimate and long-standing struggles of the lower class against land grabbing, union busting, and wage cut, among others. This pattern of adherence contrasts with the traditional social movements having the lower social strata as their default political base of support (e.g., working class and the peasantry). When it comes to the specific type of society and stage of societal evolution, the new social movement is conventionally identified with post-industrial societies (i.e., digital and knowledge economies). As such, the focus of attention diverges from the traditional social movement that is commonly associated with agricultural and industrial societies.

In varying levels, these NSM attributes manifested in the textbook tasks as evidenced by the social and sectoral agenda that correspond with this social movement, overshadowing the traditional social movement's class-focused, agriculture-based, and economic-oriented contexts. Gender activism, cultural activism, and digital activism are among the advocacies that categorically form part of the struggles under the new social movement. With respect to gender activism, among the women and gender issues that were featured and foregrounded for media text analysis in the textbook tasks include the following: body shaming, body politics, distorted beauty standards, gender stereotyping, patriarchy, objectification of women, victim-blaming, rape jokes, and gender misrepresentation (Cantor 2019, Zarate 2016). These instantiated women and gender issues were interposed to be problematized through media text analyses of magazines, comic strips, song lyrics, gag shows, news reports, films, advertisements, and public debates where gender-based symbolic violence are commonplace. Figure 2 features the women and gender issues instantiated for the case studies and media text analyses.

However, while the material dimension may not be the new social movement's focal concern, the economic aspect remains as a constitutive element of its change agenda. Certainly, the legitimate calls for anti-discrimination (gender activism), anti-cultural appropriation (cultural activism), and anti-digital divide (digital activism), for instance, cannot be advocated and advanced without the concomitant material gains that they may potentially bring about, i.e., democratic employment opportunity through gender equity, freedom from commercial exploitation by challenging the misrepresentations of indigenous cultural elements, and economic prosperity through digital inclusion, respectively.

Within this context, education plays a crucial role in the gender justice movement by confronting the dominant gender ideology that is based on prejudice and discrimination against the *socially* and *sexually* minoritized. For instance, through the *gender sensitive* and *gender responsive* textbook tasks in media and information literacy, students become aware and committed to change the ways in which technologies such as 'photoshopping' promote the "distortion of beauty standards" and render women "ashamed of their bodies" (Cantor 2019: 206). The same is true in confronting how language is employed to spread sexist attitude and mindset, especially in a country with a "predominantly patriarchal culture" (Cantor 2019). An illustrative case is a liquor brand that adopts a "double entendre" (i.e., *Nakatikim ka na ba ng kinse años?/*Have you ever tasted a 15-year old?) in its commercial billboard advertisement (Cantor 2019: 248-249).

Figure 2: Women and gender issues



Neoclassical Counterrevolution

Considerably, the neoclassical counterrevolution in the 80's rendered the conversations about class identity and class solidarity less prominent in favor of the discourses on free market, private enterprise, economic competition, economic globalization, and global competitiveness. This pattern went on until the contemporary period, influencing and encompassing "nearly every aspect of life in every nation on

earth" (Simbulan 2007). In effect, very little attention is now being accorded to themes and topics with reference to labor rights, labor unionism, and workers' solidarity in mainstream media and education. As consequences of this *ideological counterrevolution*, the discourses re-centered on the market and its primacy as an economic system. Such shift in economic logic has profound effects on how contentious labor and employment issues are represented, mediated, and undermined in the realms of media, education, and policy discourses.

News, relatedly, go through series of 'filters' that conceal, de-emphasize, and disregard certain dimensions and elements of social realities (Herman 2000 as cited in McQuail 2013). This can be observed in the media practice of undermining working class solidarity and perpetuating "imagined unity and false consciousness" (Hall 1977 as cited in McQuail 2013), notwithstanding the fact that labor-related issues such as labor exploitation and precarious employment provide relevant and grounded contexts when applying media and information literacy competencies and engendering democratic literacy. This ideological pattern is so well-entrenched that it also manifests in other media forms, including instructional materials such as textbooks and workbooks as if labor/working class struggle is an anachronism or non-existent. Among the limited instances where worker rights and welfare were incorporated in the textbook tasks are the following:

> Situational analysis. *The film director considers the working condition of the production staff by checking on them regularly.* (Magpile 2016: 134)
>
> Sample documentary topic: *Exemplary laborers or workers from any industry in the town/city/province* (Cantor 2019: 277)
>
> *Was I ethical in the way I conducted myself in front of my fellow crew members?"* (Cantor 2019: 285)

> *If constructing and making available media messages are very costly and are influenced by sales, how will the faces, lives, and relationships, say, of illiterate cave miners, who have no other means of living but working for multinational companies for a pittance in exchange for imperiling their lives, ever compete with Roliet for costly airtime, column inches, and the attention of the public?"* (Campos 2016: 68)

However, the type of situational analysis instantiated by Magpile (2016) is limited only to the idea of drawing a happy or sad face depending if the statement in question represents a positive or negative mindset/attitude. Cantor's instantiation of "exemplary laborers or workers" in the film production task is less likely to encourage students to feature a militant, progressive, and nationalist union organizer in their media content considering the ideas that mainstream society normally associates with the word "exemplary". Meanwhile, the third entry merely focuses on the dimension of *human relations* instead of *critical management praxis* or *class analysis*. It was only the textbook task of Campos (2016: 68) that made a compelling depiction of how the working class is rendered marginalized in both the *substructural* (economic) and *superstructural* dimensions (communicational) of their precarious existence.

According to critical scholar Henry Giroux (2012), the neoliberal bias for "unbridled individualism" under the present economic regime heavily undermined "communities, public values, and the public good". As a consequence, it compromised the internalization and materialization of the critical elements of participatory development, i.e., "democratic pressure, responsible citizenship, and political action" (Bauman 2001 as cited in Giroux 2012). Relatedly, discourse analyst Katarzyna Kozakowska (2010) argued that the individualist notion of success that is being associated with personal character and individual responsibility reinforces the misplaced assumption of the dominant economic paradigm that narrowly and correspondingly identifies poverty and

underdevelopment with *personal failure*. This perspective disregards the fact that these socio-economic drawbacks are essentially *structural in origin*. Moreover, the public are led to believe that the social elite's position of economic power and political prominence is a function of *personal merit* and *self-efficacy*, and *not* as an offshoot of their class origin and/or a consequence of the long-standing structural asymmetries in the society.

Social Positioning of Learners

This dysfunctional neoliberal pattern has also been observed to influence mainstream education in the broader sense. Critical development scholar Roland Simbulan (2007) demonstrated that in the academe (1) ideas are developed to perpetuate the prevailing social order, (2) arguments are shaped to legitimize the dominant epistemic arrangement, and (3) students are trained to supply the human resource requirements of the entrenched economic system. These critical observations by Simbulan (2007), especially the third one, can also be partly identified in several Media and Information Literacy textbook tasks which require the students to simulate the functions and responsibilities of the work force in the private commercial sector. Within this context, textbook contents and textbook tasks must be *alternatively* conceptualized and designed to problematize the established development practice and train students to become public sphere-oriented scholars and citizen-critics.

In several instances, learners are socially positioned as content creators and design artists for private commercial endeavors. This is consistent with Simbulan's (2007) critical exposition that neoliberal education promotes a brand of training and learning

that prepares the students as prospective human resource complement in the corporate sector. While some authors attempt to provide a discursive variation by including tasks that are situated in the non-commercial contexts, the dominant and recurring frame remains to be in the business setting (i.e., marketing products and services, boosting sales, improving show ratings, increasing revenues, proposing business plans, etc.). Observably, media and information literacy is instantiated and employed as a *business* and *marketing tool* in many similarly situated contexts such as the production of advertising materials, multimedia presentation for a business milestone, and development of a business proposal for a digital application, among others.

UNESCO's Impact and Influence

As an influential cultural body, UNESCO (2021) manifested its strong imprint in media and information literacy education. This can be observed from two textbook authors (Yuvienco 2017 and Alagaran 2019) who categorically declared their adoption of UNESCO MIL frameworks and models, particularly the incorporation of the interconnected elements of "production, languages, representation, and publics" in accessing, analyzing, evaluating, and producing media content. These four elements cannot be taken separately considering (1) the purposive nature of producing media content, (2) the strategic use of language in communicating thoughts and actions, (3) the power of media to (re)present social realities, and (4) the indispensable role of the public in media and information literacy. Employing the element of production and inquiry-based approach, Yuvienco (2017: 8), for instance, invokes UNESCO's goal of promoting "critical and creative thinking" in the learning process. The creative approach,

more particularly, manifests in his strategy of being *task-oriented* throughout the instructional material.

The Media and Information Literacy curriculum which UNESCO developed for the pre-service training of teachers identified five mutually reinforcing competencies that the students must acquire, namely "comprehension, critical thinking, creativity, cross-cultural awareness, and citizenship" (Alagaran 2013). In relation to this set of competencies, UNESCO also presented ten effective pedagogical strategies in approaching media and information literacy, i.e., "issue inquiry approach, problem-based learning, scientific inquiry, case study, cooperative learning, textual analysis, contextual analysis, translations, simulations, and production". Evidently, the UNESCO's MIL competencies and pedagogical approaches strongly align with the attributes and constructs of *place-based inquiry* and, to a certain extent, with its subsequent critical reconfiguration (i.e., *critical place-based inquiry*).

Social and Sectoral Issues

If one of the main course objectives of Media and Information Literacy is to gain "understanding of media and information as channels of communication and tools for the development of individuals and societies" (Department of Education 2013), then it is not possible to achieve this without taking into serious account the social and sectoral issues where the individuals, institutions and communities are *rooted* and/or *entangled*. Moreover, if the aim of the course is to likewise "develop students to be creative and

critical thinkers as well as responsible users and competent producers of media and information" (Department of Education 2013), then it is also not attainable without situating media education in its specific geographical, economic, political, cultural, and linguistic milieu. Within the parameter of this study, social and sectoral issues refer to (1) broad societal (e.g., chronic poverty, bureaucratic corruption) as well as (2) media-related challenges (e.g., digital divide, media monopoly) that plague the public.

Indicated in the table below are the social and sectoral issues instantiated by the authors in their respective textbook tasks which were then critically examined vis-à-vis the development issues that confronted the nation during the previous year and the actual year of the instructional material's publication as reported in mainstream and alternative news media. This comparison was aimed to determine if the textbook tasks also reflected the prevailing as well as recurring social and sectoral issues in the country. In addition to the existing list, this research also sought to reveal what other equally pressing development and policy issues did the textbook authors include and foreground in the textbook tasks for analysis and intervention.

Table 4: Social and sectoral issues featured in the textbook tasks in relation to Philippine development realities

Social and sectoral issues in the textbook tasks	Philippine development realities in mainstream and alternative media
Campos 2016 (in relation to 2015-2016 development issues) hoaxes, misinformation, disinformation, book burning, book banning, killing of authors, thought control, historical distortion, knowledge monopoly, poverty pornography, prohibitive cost of advertising, crowding out of public issues from news coverage, imbalance in news reporting, bureaucrat capitalism,	**2015 development issues** corruption, Mary Jane Veloso case, terrorism, disasters, Mamasapano clash, secessionism in Mindanao, Kentex fire tragedy, West Philippine Sea, *tanim-bala* ("bullet planting"), election-related killings, dengue outbreak, increase in HIV cases, ASEAN economic integration

media monopoly, cultural imperialism, news imperialism, commodified information, dying culture, poverty, problematic basic social service delivery, lack of rural electrification, economic dualism, development aggression, *Lumad* struggle, obesity, information obesity, colonialism	
Liquigan 2016 (in relation to 2015-2016 development issues) plagiarism, misinformation, disinformation, deceptive public relations and advertising, political conflict and strife, ASEAN integration, history and struggle of the Bangsamoro people, sensationalized reporting, Metro-Manila centric coverage, violation of netiquette, flaming, bullying, internet addiction, cybercrime, digital divide, media monopoly, child abuse, Arab Spring movement, undersubscribed sports	**2016 development issues** El Niño, NPA-military clash, temporary restraining order vs. K-12 curriculum, money laundering, corruption, Duterte's rape joke, farmers' protest in Kidapawan, DICT creation, informal peace talks, Duterte's presidential inauguration, Zika virus, dengue vaccination, illegal drug trade, peace talks with CPP-NPA-NDF, Marcos burial in LNMB, pseudo-investments
Magpile 2016 (in relation to 2015-2016 development issues) Martial law, human rights violation, torture, *desaparecidos*, voter's education, issues related to media and information ethics, digital divide, cyberbullying, media abuse and misuse, piracy, taxing online shops, racist remarks, legal issues in media and information, poverty	**2017 development issues** BIFF vs. AFP, illegal gambling, corruption, signing of Paris Agreement on climate change, *Kadamay* occupy movement, nationwide ban on public smoking, disasters, transport strikes, avian influenza, TRAIN law signing
Zarate 2016 (in relation to 2015-2016 development issues) misrepresentation of women, secessionism in Mindanao, fiscal mismanagement in disaster rehabilitation, socio-cultural issues in relation to the OFW phenomenon, network war, gender stereotyping, waste problem, lack of disaster preparedness, peasant poverty, issues surrounding reproductive health, market model, media monopoly, dangers of state control over media	**2018 development issues** TRAIN law, ban on OFW deployment in Kuwait, announced withdrawal from the International Criminal Court, Boracay rehabilitation, barangay and SK elections, anti-hazing law, disasters, conviction of Imelda Marcos, return of *Balangiga* bells
Yuvienco 2017 (in relation to 2016-2017 development issues) bigotry, plagiarism, disinformation,	**2019 development issues** Bangsamoro organic law plebiscite, arrest of Maria Ressa, withdrawal from the ICC,

misinformation, crime perception, media ethics issues, threat to indigenous knowledge, disaster readiness	corruption, termination of peace agreement with CPP-NPA-NDF, signing of the Magna Carta of the Poor, signing of the Safe Space Act, midterm elections, Philippine Space Agency creation, African swine flu and measles outbreak, re-emergence of polio
Alagaran 2019 (in relation to 2018-2019 development issues) plagiarism, digital divide, depression associated with Facebook use, stereotyping, media freedom issues, climate change, digital citizenship, media and information ethics issues, cyberthreats	
Cantor 2019 (in relation to 2018-2019 development issues) cultural appropriation, intersectionality of social exclusion, cultural discrimination, racism, body shaming, disinformation, gender discrimination, media ethics issues, gender stereotyping, sexualization of children, rape jokes, victim-blaming, stereotyping based on social/civil status	

Sources: Campos (2016), Liquigan (2016), Magpile (2016), Zarate (2016), Yuvienco (2017), Alagaran (2019), Cantor (2019), https://www.inquirer.net/, https://www.philstar.com/, https://www.bulatlat.com/, https://pinoyweekly.org/#2

Campos' (2016) consistent emphasis on disinformation and misinformation throughout the textbook tasks is commendable in the broader context of the highly contentious national and local elections that took place during the publication of the instructional material.

The crowding out phenomenon in news reporting that Campos (2016) also foregrounded by instantiating the case of a celebrity vis-à-vis the pressing issues of national significance will allow the students to reflect deeply if the set of news and information that they receive from mainstream media is indeed reflective and representative of the social and sectoral issues in the country in terms of *impact*,

relevance, and *criticality*.

Commendably, Zarate (i.e., secessionism in Mindanao), Campos (i.e., development aggression experienced by the *Lumad*), and Liquigan (i.e., cultural practices of the *Lumad*) instantiated Mindanao-related social and sectoral issues albeit in varying levels of inquiry, i.e., media text analysis for the first two and mere identification of the preferred information source for the third. The inclusion of Mindanao public affairs is a welcome development in veering away from the traditionally Luzon-centric and urban-oriented rendering in news reporting and contextless representation in media education in general.

Zarate's inclusion of a case study about fiscal mismanagement within the context of disaster rehabilitation is noteworthy for integrating two pressing and recurring issues in the Philippines for critical analysis and intervention, i.e., calamities and bureaucratic pathologies. This successive pattern (or vicious cycle) can be accurately described as '*double disaster*', '*disaster within a disaster*', or '*disaster in disaster management*'. For this socio-sectoral issue, Zarate (2016: 50) asked the students to develop a diagram that will expose the "interlocking problems that led to the slow distribution and inefficient use of huge amounts of funds meant for the rehabilitation and recovery of areas ravaged by Typhoon Yolanda".

On the controversial issue of corruption taking place in various levels and dimensions of governance, Zarate (2016) foregrounded this *social pathology and structural malaise* as part of an in-depth analysis. Part of the task requires tracing the ownership structure of the elite's media and non-media conglomerates. Specifically, Zarate instantiated corrupt practices within the context of employing public power for

private gain (i.e., *bureaucrat capitalism*) wherein she asked the students to research if specific media organizations have owners or their close kins holding public office. Relatedly, this complements the task of Campos (2016: 69) requiring the student to find out "if the owners of the leading media networks have political connections like relatives, allies, and patrons." The other corruption-related tasks include Magpile's (2016) situational analysis about public sector corruption and act of rebellion as well as Liquigan's (2016) supplementary reading material on corruption and the people's indignation as a collective response.

Magpile's background in history and the surrounding issues about Marcos' burial in the *Libingan ng mga Bayani* (LNMB) in 2016 elicited a task about Martial Law and the horrors it brought about such as tortures, extrajudicial killings, and enforced disappearances. This is a noteworthy task that critically links the present to the past (memory activism).

In textbook writing then and now, it can be argued that *terrorism* and *population issues* are among the most controversial themes. As contentious matters, these topics can potentially create discord among stakeholders who are coming from various ideological persuasions and political standpoints, especially between the *conservative, liberal*, and *progressive* groups. However, this should not prevent textbook authors from including these development debates as issues to examine and deliberate on by the learners. Zarate's task that seeks to critically interrogate the contentious linking of rural poverty to population increase through a media text analysis of a news article is a step towards this direction.

Considering the recurring environmental problems in the global and local scale,

academic authors need to incorporate more *ethico-ecological* themes in the textbook tasks because this discursive mainstreaming will provide a contextual application to critical pedagogy and promote environmental communication praxis among the youth. The social mobilization task of Zarate (2016) proposing a community-based solid waste management program is notable in this regard.

The various communicable diseases (e.g., HIV, dengue, polio, Zika virus and avian flu, among others) that imperiled Philippine public health should have also been featured as instantiated cases and contexts in the textbook tasks. The ongoing pandemic made media and education stakeholders painstakingly realize about the worsening two-pronged public health challenges, i.e., continuing threat of contagious diseases alongside the increasing prevalence of non-communicable illnesses (*double burden of disease*). However, considering the ongoing public health emergency, the pattern may change in a manner that will accord more attention to contagious diseases, thereby possibly sideswiping the equal urgency of dealing with non-communicable illnesses. In maximizing media and information literacy's potential in health promotion and education, the *triple burden of disease* must also be foregrounded as a case and context in media text analysis and media content production. The triple burden of disease pertains to the co-existence (and compounding effects) of infectious diseases (e.g., COVID-19, tuberculosis), non-communicable diseases (e.g., cardio-vascular and metabolic diseases), and accidents/injuries (including mental health illnesses and other infirmities associated with modernization and urbanization) experienced by a given population – a trend which is increasingly becoming common in many developing regions (Ortiz & Abrigo 2017). The ongoing pandemic provided media and information

literacy a rich context (e.g., vaccine hesitancy among specific population segments, health myths in the social media) to apply both sociological and media text analysis in the teaching-learning praxis. As such, the textbook revisions as well as the subsequent new publications necessitate the inclusion of cases and contexts related to health, wellness, disaster, risk, and science communication.

While the news and public affairs section of mass media serves as a veritable mine of concrete cases and contexts for analysis and intervention, the textbook authors complement it with *disciplinal concepts and constructs* that deepen and sharpen the ongoing discourse. This *complementation* is vital in covering what dimension or level of analysis has been missed out or downplayed in the news media. Within this context, the role of media education is crucial in interrogating preconceived notions and pursuing the critical conversations about social change and development. For instance, the instantiation of the social reality of *economic dualism* by Campos (2016) in most of his tasks on film analysis reflects the superordinate factors (i.e., root causes) that underpin many development and policy issues in the rural regions.

Information Dysfunctions and Pathologies

Years prior to 2016 and those that follow saw the intensification of disinformation and misinformation. These information pathologies were methodically employed and deployed in various political communication and electoral campaign strategies by unscrupulous groups to undermine established democratic processes and structures. Add to this list of dysfunctions the spread of online scams and pseudo-investments that are preying on unsuspecting and vulnerable victims, defrauding them of their hard-

earned savings. In fact, this researcher has served as resource person of TV Patrol Palawan, a regional television program, in several news reports about the proliferating pseudo-investments in the province in 2016 (Palatino 2016). Due to the employment problem brought about by the ongoing pandemic, pseudo-investments also became more prevalent, thereby making media education and financial information literacy an even more compelling need.

Poverty and Inequality

As a development issue, poverty is observed to be severe and persistent in the Philippines. Hence, it is expected that this social and sectoral issue figures prominently in the textbook tasks and learning activities as a recurring subject of deliberation and debate. Such is how poverty is instantiated and represented in the instructional materials through the following cases and contexts: poverty and rurality, poverty of the peasant class, poverty pornography, poverty and philanthropy, and poverty in relation to lack of family planning. The questions are commendable in terms of (1) reflecting on the rural condition of the local inhabitants, (2) interrogating the tendency to romanticize the poor and resort to poverty pornography, (3) problematizing the 'culture of poverty', and (4) revealing the impact of structural violence on people's well-being and quality of life.

> *Does the rural landscape immediately mean <u>poverty and backwardness</u>?*
> (Campos 2016: 119)

> *What questions come to mind as you read the <u>news story (on farmers' poverty)</u>?*
> (Zarate 2016: 90-91)

> *Why must the recipient of the prizes be portrayed as <u>needy and poor</u>? Is there anything*

> *wrong with this typical portrayal?* (Campos 2016: 62)

> *Do you agree with the premises of the main informant that poverty is largely due to breeding large families?* (Zarate 2016: 91)

> *There is no electricity in the community. How does this fact play a quiet but crucial role in the state of literacy of the people in the community?* (Campos 2016: 112)

From the critical standpoint, this interview task below must avoid the pitfalls of poverty pornography that is commonly employed in mainstream media to gain sympathy from donors by depicting pitiful narratives of people in deprived and disadvantaged conditions (Dortonne 2016). Within this context, media education therefore must alternatively adopt *critical media literacy* to make profound sense of the poverty reality and the range of proposed anti-poverty programs and strategies. Critical place-based inquiry is also useful in apprehending the broader social context of the poverty phenomenon considering its complexity and multidimensionality.

> *Do a detailed radio interview featuring an indigent individual from the community and gain help from the listeners as part of the public service. The radio interview must captivate the hearts of the listeners with its personal account of the interview* (Magpile 2016: 178).

This task that follows embodies the *media arts education* approach but could have been reconfigured to also exemplify the critical media literacy framework. In this activity, poverty appears to be conceived as natural, functioning only as a backdrop, and hence *politically* and *ideologically unproblematized*. Within this context, creativity and criticality in media and information literacy education need to be wielded in their

political and *transformative sense* if the consummate end-goal is structural change (i.e., 'change of circumstances').

> *"Demonstrate how to make a sample greeting cards for underprivileged elementary pupils who will give the greeting cards to their loved ones"*
> (Magpile 2016: 178).

Rural Poverty and Land Reform

In a chapter on values and ideology, Zarate (2016: 90) featured a news article about chronic poverty, the peasant class and land reform and then she went on to ask the students about the implications of its content, specifically with respect to the following considerations: *target readership, values system, privileged perspective, subdued voice,* and *ideological standpoint*. This is a notable learning activity that will help guide the students in critically analyzing (1) the political slant and ideological underpinning of the news story, (2) the multiple positionalities of the interest groups involved, and (3) the institutionalized power differences between social forces. Concerned about the hegemonic discourse on poverty being forwarded by the news story, Zarate (2016) raised this reflective question as a follow through.

> *Do you agree with the premises of the main informant – that persistent poverty is largely due to the breeding of large families?* (Zarate 2016: 91)

This is the one and only task that touched on land reform in relation to poverty despite being a contentious politico-economic issue in Philippine historical and contemporary realities. Beginning with the encouraging initiatives of Zarate (e.g., farmers) and Campos (e.g., fisherfolks and indigenous people) and guided with

the appropriate analytical lenses, there is an even greater need to mainstream social and sectoral issues that reflect the country's rural political and economic conditions.

Technological and Digital Divide

In a nation characterized by wide wealth and income inequality, it can be argued that digital divide is also a glaring social reality. As such, this social and sectoral issue must also have a prominent part in the textbook tasks as a subject of critical analysis and intervention. In the instructional materials covered, the interventions and initiatives that were proposed to deal with digital divide were the following: (1) researching about the phenomenon to help address it (Liquigan 2016: 83), (2) comparing the set of researched information about this access divide (Alagaran 2019: 68), (3) determining the repercussion of internet speed to information processing (Liquigan 2016: 195), (4) reflecting on the personal need for internet access (Magpile 2016: 67), and (5) contemplating about internet connectivity in relation to digital divide (Magpile 2016: 93). While this set of information is relevant in understanding digital divide, there is also a need to examine the extent and impact of this information pathology in the structural level and reveal what sector/region is the most deprived of access and hence the most *digitally marginalized* or in the words of Palatino (2020) the most "*digitally oppressed*". There is also no instantiation of viable strategies that will deal with this resource divide in the collective level.

> *Research what digital divide is all about and how you can help to address it.* (Liquigan 2016: 83)

> *What is digital divide? Surf the internet for answers and compare how different sources explain this. Which source is the most reliable?* (Alagaran 2019: 68)

> *What is the impact of Internet speed in processing the information that you gather online?* (Liquigan 2016: 195)
>
> *All your classmates have Internet access at home. You feel left out since they chat online. How will you tell your parents that you want an Internet connection at home too?* (Magpile 2016: 67)
>
> True or False. *Access to Internet can become limited in some areas where there is digital divide.* (Magpile 2016: 93)

Even if Media and Information Literacy as a subject area involves the use of media and communication technologies, textbook authors must still be ever conscious of the varying levels of student access to these technological and digital resources, i.e., both hardware and software. Critical place-based pedagogy advocates Langran and DeWitt (2020: 63) forewarn that educators should not create an "uneven playing field for those who may not have regular access to technology", lest they become guilty of worsening the very problem they purport to address. It has been observed that some textbook tasks heavily involve the use of the following digital hardware and software, namely digital camera, smart phone, digital voice recorder, and editing software, among others. While some of these textbook authors encourage the students to only use free downloadable applications, this may still be not feasible without the available requisite technological resources.

Central to the issue of unequal access to information and communication technology is the social reality of poverty among a large section of the Philippine population. Across all the covered textbook titles, there were noticeable variations in situating the tasks in the specific context of poverty and inequality and in depicting how this socio-

economic condition impinges on media, communication, and education. This observable inadequacy is manifested in two dimensions, i.e., (1) tasks that fail to factor in the reality of poverty as a context or backdrop of the socio-technical and socio-technological issues under review and (2) tasks that require information and communication technologies that may not be available or accessible to students in an economically and geographically disadvantaged position. Some learning activities are heavily reliant on high-end technologies, thereby rendering these requirements very difficult or totally impossible for the lower class and digitally challenged groups to complete and comply with. As such, the formulation of textbook tasks needs to take into serious account the varying socio-economic contexts of the students and their communities. By also factoring the socio-cultural situatedness of the learners (i.e., ethnic diversity) in the task design, *indigenous* and *folk media* therefore must likewise be mainstreamed as alternative modes of output rendering and presentation.

The existing curriculum in Media and Information Literacy opens the possibilities for students to get introduced to information and communication technology (ICT) but very limited opportunity to be acquainted with and to develop deeper appreciation and understanding of ICT4D (*ICT for development*). Therefore, a set of reading tasks and guide questions by Campos (2016: 31) about ICT4D is a welcome initiative, especially for students in the Global South like the Philippines where a sizable number are situated in rural and urban poor communities or in localities characterized by *economic dualism*. While the set of guide questions allows the students to situate their answers in the context of Third world realities, some refinements can still be implemented. As such, there is a need to incorporate (1) additional tasks requiring the students to research

about the broader socio-economic context surrounding the technological innovations as well as (2) guide questions inquiring them about the need for an alternative vision of an inclusive *socio-scientific* and *socio-technological order*. Along this line, adopting James Smith's (2009) Science and Technology for Development as further reading will be very useful in introducing the learners to the dialectics of technological change and in envisioning an alternative socio-scientific and socio-technological future. It will also serve as a viable preparation for students who will eventually take Science, Technology and Society (STS) in higher education.

OFW Phenomenon and the Remittance Economy

The Philippines is considered as a *remittance economy*, hence the tendency of some advertisements to capitalize on this socio-economic and socio-cultural phenomenon as a recurring narrative. For instance, in a commercial advertisement featured by Zarate (2016: 73), she highlighted how the longingness of the overseas Filipino workers (OFW) for their families was cleverly depicted by the social marketing strategy of a transnational beverage company. She then interposed the question asking the learners about the "implications of this media text to the issues of OFWs, to corporate social responsibility, and to having Coca-Cola products generously displayed in several scenes in this media text?". It is a well-thought-out reflective question that simultaneously deals with the issues of media representation of Filipino out-migration as well as the ethico-moral dimension of *corporate social responsibility* and *cause marketing*.

> *In 2012, Coca-Cola launched an extended advertisement featuring the plight of overseas Filipino workers who did not have the means to come home for Christmas.* (Zarate 2016: 73)

> *What are the implications of this media text…to having to see Coca-Cola products generously displayed in several scenes in this media text?* (Zarate 2016: 73)

In another media text analysis task by Zarate (2016: 51), she instantiated a softdrink advertisement of the same company that instrumentalized the "notions of happiness and family life" in relation to "OFW phenomenon and Filipino family values" to promote and sell products. The students are then asked if such "take on selling a product" (i.e., anchored on the "OFW phenomenon") and the attempt "how advertising tries to be socially relevant" advantageous or not as an innovation in marketing? This divergent and open-ended question on a social and sectoral issue will allow the learners to delve deeper and become more evaluative on matters pertaining to *social marketing* and *emotion economy*.

Electoral Politics

Despite the regularity of Philippine elections which take place every three years, only few tasks were formulated that relate to this democratic exercise and, exceptionally, it came from one textbook only. Given the controversies and dysfunctions associated with how this political practice is observed, Magpile (2016) instantiated the following socio-pedagogical initiatives and interventions in the textbook tasks and learning activities: (1) website development for voter's education, (2) campaign ads for a presidential contender, (3) reflection question about a TV network's biased campaigning, (4) multiple choice question and situational analysis on media ethics in

relation to electoral politics, and (5) documentary film to promote *alternative* candidates. The lineup of activities is commendable for incorporating tasks that involve self-reflection, media production, and advocacy work in various levels of engagements (i.e., personal as well as institutional). In supplementing the existing lineup, the production of subsequent textbook editions and the publication of new titles necessitate the inclusion of electoral campaign strategies and election survey reports as cases for media text analysis and social criticism considering the rich dialectical contexts that these situated practices provide.

> *Create an informative and attractive website to educate the public to vote wisely* (Magpile 2016: 28).
>
> *Create an informative yet creative print ad campaign for an aspiring presidential candidate to convince voters that the said candidate is worthy and qualified.* (Magpile 2016: 150).
>
> *How would you feel if TV networks use broadcast media for a biased political campaign?* (Magpile 2016: 104)
>
> Multiple choice. *Keith did not accept the bribe from the politician who wants him to write a negative story about his political rival.* (Magpile 2016: 69)
>
> Situational analysis. *It is acceptable to hire the services of an advertising firm to improve the image of a controversial person running for public office.* (Magpile 2016: 217)
>
> *Feature ordinary people who can be role models for public service and leadership in time for the upcoming national elections.* (Magpile 2016: 133)

Textbook tasks must contribute to the end-goal of mainstreaming the people's development and policy agenda by broadening and deepening the political conversations in public fora and electoral debates. However, as already established,

only very limited tasks are devoted to election-related social and sectoral issues. The age group of senior high school students are nearing the voting age (i.e., Grade 11) or are in fact already part of the electorate (i.e., Grade 12). As such, media and information literacy should be designed with the end-goal of deepening their socio-political consciousness and transforming them into responsible voters and engaged citizens. This is even more pressing in view of the general observation that disinformation and misinformation have become most prevalent in the last three election seasons, i.e., 2016, 2019, and 2022.

Under the prevailing communication regime dominated by “disinformation establishments” and “architects of networked disinformation” (Ong & Cabañes 2018), MIL education must therefore be consciously designed as a countervailing measure in combatting these information pathologies and a proactive mechanism in preventing them from emerging in the first place. Relatedly, this qualitative research asserts that all the lofty societal goals of deliberative dialogue, social justice education, and rights-based development cannot proceed and succeed without the democratic access to truthful information and its ethical, empowering, and transformative use.

Intersection of Social and Sectoral Issues

Zarate’s (2016: 50) learning activity which requires the students to identify and map the *interlocking social problems* in a diagram format is helpful in developing their analytical, evaluative, and integrative skills. Specifically, it will also allow them to critically recognize the complexity of the social terrain and establish the unseen connections between the economic, political, cultural, and ethical issues. To enhance

and deepen their learning experience, the students must also be trained to employ the *problematique technique* in identifying the *super-ordinate* (i.e., root causes) and *subordinate factors* (i.e., symptoms) of the development issue under scrutiny. This will also help them formulate viable and sustainable solutions that target and address the *problem source*.

> *The article cites several interlocking problems that led to the slow and inefficient use of huge amounts of funds meant for the rehabilitation and recovery of areas ravaged by typhoon Yolanda. Make a diagram to represent the interlocking nature of these problems* (Zarate 2016: 50).

Institutional and Discursive Controls

As a social practice, textbook task development needs to be apprehended within the context of how "institutional controls are exerted" (Bonvillain 2008). Forming parts of this set of institutional mechanisms are the existing K-12 Senior High School (SHS) curriculum and the Media and Information Literacy (MIL) curriculum guide as well as the prevailing academic and formatting standards in textbook writing and textbook task design. These social controls would constitute not only the coded/overt dimensions (e.g., alignment to the prescribed curriculum) but also the uncoded/covert social norms (e.g., socio-cultural considerations).

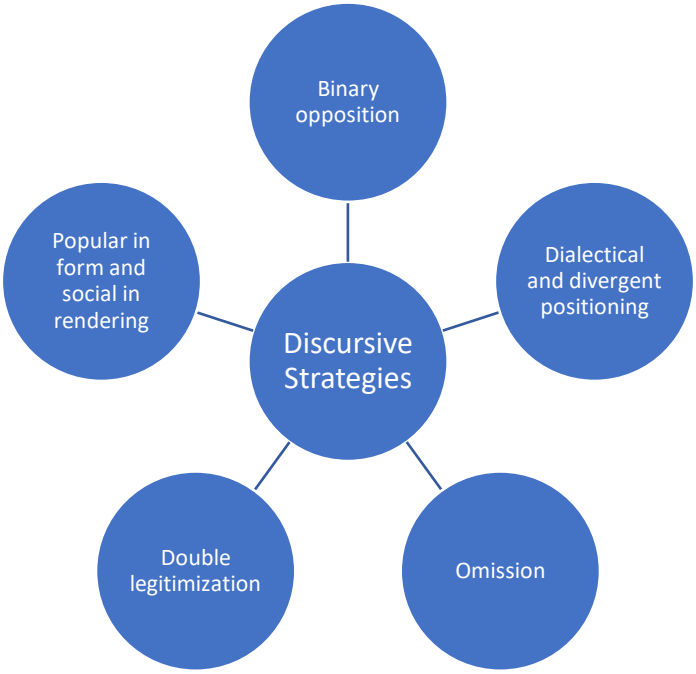
From the critical standpoint, the experience of being subjected "under their authority" over an "extended period of time and/or critical periods of life" must be examined and interrogated (Bonvillain 2008). In the context of formal education, these so-called extended and critical encounters would conceivably include the experience of textbook adoption and utilization. With specific reference to this critical textbook inquiry, this totality of institutional encounter would cover the students' exposure to the textbook's

instantiated socio-sectoral issues as cases and contexts and the corresponding interposition of pedagogical interventions and initiatives. The *regularity*, *frequency*, and *intensity* of these institutional and instructional encounters, as a result, create a pattern and impression of normalcy, naturalness, and ordinariness – a condition which can potentially (and regrettably) render education stakeholders to become *undiscerning* and *uncritical*.

Discursive Strategies

Discursive strategies play a powerful role when employed to *produce, reproduce*, and *legitimize* orthodox social arrangements and communication practices. Alternatively, these approaches can also be methodically utilized to *challenge* and *resist* dominant discursive norms and structures. Based on the wide range of textbook tasks and learning activities covered, the following discursive strategies were observed either exclusively in specific textbook titles or broadly across all the seven instructional materials.

Figure 3: Discursive strategies



Binary Opposition

Binary opposition (*dualism*) is an approach frequently used in examining an element (or dimension) of a social practice (or social reality) by relating (or juxtaposing) it against another. However, the use of binary opposition continues to be perceived with ambivalence. As a discursive strategy, it is empowering when employed in revealing and interrogating institutionalized power differences. In contrast, binary opposition can also be disabling when instrumentalized to induce, reinforce and perpetuate prejudice (i.e., mindset) and discrimination (i.e., actual practice), particularly against the already vulnerable and disenfranchised.

From the critical viewpoint, the task that requires comparing music production and consumption between the Philippines and the West (Yuvienco 2017: 82) can be

potentially empowering and liberating if it also includes a follow-up query that will probe deeper on the contentious socio-historical bases of their similarities and differences. Considering the *colonial* and *neocolonial relationship* between the Philippines and the countries in the Global North, it is therefore necessary to take into consideration the history of power disparities and its present-day cultural embodiments in the conduct of the sociological and media text analysis.

Generally, when one concept or element is pitted against another, it creates an impression that they cannot go together. For instance, contrary to the common dualistic approach of perceiving independent film in the context of how it differs from the mainstream counterpart, Liquigan (2016: 182) sought to determine how they can actually "co-exist and complement each other" in terms of creative rendering and storytelling. This also points to the *pattern of convergence* that can now be increasingly observed across various media platforms. In this confluence of elements, it is crucial to ask every time whose interest between the mainstream and independent film dominates at the end of the day. Another inherent limitation of binary opposition is the failure to represent social realities in multiple categories (e.g., trichotomy, plurality, etc.).

> *What is the main difference between an independent film and a mainstream film in terms of technique and thrust?* (Liquigan 2016: 182)

> *How can independent and mainstream films coexist and complement each other in the aspects of storytelling and production values?* (Liquigan 2016: 182)

The matrix of textbook tasks below also embodied binary opposition where the bases of comparison/contrast can be generally categorized in terms of the following renderings: superiority, dispensability, impact, attribute, representation, intention, and

implication, with some implying patterns of convergence, co-existence, and contradiction.

Table 5: Binary opposition

Elements/Entities/Processes	Bases of Comparison/Contrast	Authors
hand-written text and word-processing technology	what the other may not be able to offer	Liquigan 2016: 151
web and mobile applications and traditional sources of information	if one can take the role of the other	Liquigan 2016: 190
u-learning (ubiquitous learning) and traditional modes of learning	how does one impact the other	Liquigan 2016: 104
popular and scholarly sources	when is one more useful than the other	Liquigan 2016: 35
broadsheet and tabloid	variation in terms of creator, content, and consumer dimensions	Alagaran 2019: 87
FM and AM	aspects of similarities or differences	Liquigan 2016: 40
urban and rural landscapes	intellectual and emotional effects of the comparison	Campos 2016: 119
Lumad girl and city girl	filmmaker's visualization	Campos 2016: 120
rich and poor dichotomy	whether incidentally or intentionally rendered	Cantor 2019: 203
American media and Al Jazeera	differences of media depiction and the corresponding implications	Campos 2016: 76
oral and printed traditions	differences on how the two social worlds narrate the past	Campos 2016: 14
book and radio	quality of life in the society when dominated by a particular form of media in relation to another	Campos 2016: 22
book and television	social condition when dominated by a particular form of media in relation to another	Campos 2016: 22
wisdom and information	inherent and qualitative differences	Campos 2016: 9
independent and mainstream films	techniques and thrusts	Liquigan 2016: 182
Philippine and western music	similarities and differences in production and consumption	Yuvienco 2017: 82

Dialectical and Divergent Positioning

In complementing binary opposition, the academic authors also employed the dialectical positioning of elements and entities, specifically in requiring self-reflection exercises and community-based seminars. In the first case below, the dialectical positioning of the learners is rendered in relation to other community stakeholders, thereby promoting both *self-awareness* and *other-awareness*. This strategy will allow the students to take into consideration their social positions and the social situatedness of the other sectors in the society whenever they create or consume any media content. In the second and third entries, the dialectical positioning is framed as an *act of resistance* to orthodox media perspectives, persuasions, and practices.

> *Do you think that vacationing by the sea is really "the life"? Why does uploading on social media incline us toward writing such posts? Will the people who do not go to the beach for their vacation but actually live by the sea, such as fisherfolk, share our sentiment?* (Campos 2016: 60)

> *"What are the means by which media and information texts from television, print, radio and the internet glorify negative behaviors? What have I done to resist?"* (Zarate 2016: 96)

> *"How did the media texts and information speak to you, and how were you convinced, and what tools and persuasions did it use? Are there ways of resisting this?"* (Zarate 2016: 99)

The highly ideological nature of the topic in the illustrative task below is likely to result in *divergent positioning* among the students. In addition, this contentious issue about social conflict can also potentially bring about insightful discussion and debate on the (1) *ethics of armed revolution*, (2) *politics of military adventurism*, and (3) *morality of*

political radicalism. However, the situational analysis instantiated by Magpile (2016) only involves "drawing a happy face if the statement conveys a positive attitude" or "a sad face if otherwise". This limited engagement with the text can be modified and developed further by instantiating the social and sectoral issue in question as a topic for a follow-up class activity such as contemplative essay, political debate, or deliberative dialogue.

> Situational Analysis. *General Frank distributed flyers campaigning for the people to rebel and organize a revolution to oust the president he accused of being corrupt*.
> (Magpile 2016: 104)

Omission/Exclusion

Whether deliberate or otherwise, omission (or exclusion) is one of the discursive strategies being employed by the authors in the politico-communicative act of designing textbook tasks. This is manifested in the manner whereby pressing development issues as subjects of inquiry and debate are missed out or ignored in the instantiated cases and contexts. Disregarding the most relevant and pressing socio-sectoral issues will render the curricular objective of critically analyzing the "economic, education, social and political" challenges in media and information literacy as well as the associated "threats, risks, abuse and misuse" in media practice to become *fragmentary*, *incoherent*, and *wanting* to a great extent (Department of Education 2013). Within the context of the Philippine social realities, among the politically charged and hence highly ideological development issues that were not instantiated as cases and contexts that could have further enriched the substantive dimension of the textbook tasks are the following: chronic hunger, urban poverty, land-use conversion, communist insurgency, and the need for judicial reform, among others.

Two authors devoted a substantive and critical discussion about media killings in the main text (Campos 2016 and Cantor 2019); however, it was only Campos (2016) who incorporated a learning activity pertaining to this human right issue in the textbook task section. In this particular task, Campos (2016: 186-187) inquired the students about the number of journalists in the country who have been murdered "in the line of duty". The author also asked about the "patterns of violence" across countries and, consistent with the progressive orientation of critical praxis, he then inquired the learners about what concrete action should be taken given the available researched information about media killings. The instantiation of the pervasive culture of impunity in connection with journalist killings for *social analysis* and *action-taking* is consistent with human rights and social justice education and must also be encouraged for general adoption across all textbook titles. In 2016, the Philippines ranked second as the most dangerous place for journalists and, considering its gravity and urgency, media killing qualifies as a legitimate media-related issue that necessitates serious investigation, inquiry, and position-taking.

Given the prevalence of armed conflict, MIL's role in transformative education and peacebuilding becomes even more pressing. From the critical outlook, sustainable peace is not possible if it is not based on social justice and inclusive development. However, despite its seriousness it was also only Campos (2016) who touched on the peace process in Mindanao, pointing out how this development issue is being eclipsed by the sensationalized reporting of celebrity news in mainstream media.

Double Legitimization

Apart from the above-enumerated instructional activities that the textbook authors require the students to perform and act upon, the former also provide supplementary reading and viewing tasks to enrich the latter's learning experience and encounter. In varying degrees, the reading and audio-visual materials that the academic authors recommend also reflect their discursive orientation and commitment. The practice of providing (and invoking) supplementary academic resources leads to the mutual ideological reinforcement of the textbook itself and the accompanying complementary materials, thereby bringing about *double legitimization*. Double legitimization, in the context of this study, pertains to the phenomenon where the academic reputation of the textbook authors and the influence and authority of the institutions and individuals they invoke lend credence to each other's 'cultural capital', 'symbolic capital', and 'institutionally derived rights'.

Cases in point are the materials from the following institutional sources being proposed and instantiated for reference and analysis: Center for Media Literacy (Zarate 2016), UNESCO (Yuvienco 2017, Alagaran 2019), Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (Campos 2016), Rappler (Magpile 2016), Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility (Campos 2016), Reporters Without Borders (Campos 2016), Committee to Protect Journalist (Campos 2016), and International Press Institute (Campos 2016), among others.

Popular in Form and Social in Rendering

In an ingenious attempt to promote social relevance and critical thought among the young learners, some textbook authors devised ways to do so through popular means.

By way of illustration, there are tasks which require the students to apply their creativity based on the peculiarities of popular culture and that must also incorporate socially relevant themes and contents. While this approach has its merits (i.e., integration of family values), the well-meaning effort might be compromised and undermined by the prevailing decadent culture that is all-too-common in "lamestream" media. This dilemma reflects what Campos (2016: 87) raised as "messages that will be hard to communicate given only conventional media form". In the specific context of this research, it corresponds with the *discursive alternatives* (or counter-imperatives) that will be difficult to articulate and accomplish employing only the orthodox pedagogical strategies.

A political advocacy that promotes an anti-bigotry standpoint is shown in one of the academic tasks by Yuvienco (2017) which encourages online gamers to participate in the aforesaid social cause. The website which he featured seeks to end the use of stigmatizing, discriminatory, and hateful language in online games. This popular in form and social in content approach in advocacy work possesses a huge potential in the promotion of ethical and responsible media use, especially among the youth.
In interrogating online games, the task that requires learners to apply *game studies* to Facebook Gameroom and Dinomaster is commendable in developing the skills of students in critical cultural and media analysis. As a form of media criticism, this task involves the analysis of online games in their respective socio-technological and socio-historical contexts.

In another textbook task that seeks to deal with social exclusion, Liquigan (2016: 44) required the students to assume the role of a radio disc jockey who needs to

reconceptualize the radio show into a “more informative and educational” format. In achieving this objective, the learners are required to take into specific consideration the language, target listeners (i.e., teenagers ages 13-16), time slots, and segments as main socio-demographic underpinnings of the program reformatting.

> *The producer of the TV show instructed your team to make a fresh but interesting storyline for a skit on their noontime variety show. Make a skit appropriate for children which sends a message of family values.* (Magpile 2016: 81)

> *Are you a gamer? Care to join GAB or Gamers Against Bigotry? Check out http://gamersagainstbigotry.org/. Sign, share and help.* (Yuvienco 2017: 27)

> *Go back to the game and play it again (Facebook Gameroom or Dinosaster), this time with the aim of analyzing it. To help you in this task you may refer to an MIT course called Introduction to Game Studies. It offers a learning resource which serves as a guide for game analysis.* (Yuvienco 2017: 143)

> *The challenge is to think of a fresher and more informative/educational format that does not mimic the existing shows on radio.* (Liquigan 2016: 44)

From the critical frame of reference, this discursive strategy (i.e., popular in form and social in rendering) may only be considered as a *transition stage* that must eventually be reconfigured and redesigned as *coherently alternative in both structure and content*.

Chapter V

DISCURSIVE (COUNTER)IMPERATIVES

“Ideology is at its most powerful when it is invisible, when discourses have been naturalized and become part of our everyday common sense.” – Hilary Janks

Mobilizational Force of (Counter)Ideology

As a “mobilizational and inspirational force” in the movement for social change, ideology “enables people to achieve what are otherwise seemingly unimaginable and unattainable goals” (Tayag n.d.; Ecktein 1975 as cited in Tayag, n.d.). Ideology, therefore, emboldens individuals and groups to (1) interrogate pressing issues at hand, (2) imagine an alternative future, and (3) mobilize their ranks into collective reflective action. Within the parameter of this study, ideology is also conceived to underpin the curriculum frameworks, media education approaches, and genre norms that govern textbook writing and textbook task design.

Applying Branston and Stafford’s (2010) conception of ideology, the ideas and discourses that are contained in the textbooks task are “usually partial and selective as all positions are”. This explains why textbook tasks vary in terms of *breath* and *depth* as well as *values* and *vistas*. The selective and purposive approach in framing cases and contexts in the textbook task rendering makes this social practice unarguably *politico-normative* and hence *ideological*. Aside from the discursive and pedagogical dimensions, textbook authors also need to factor in the tight schedule of the course (i.e., running for one semester only), limited textbook space (i.e., 215 pages on the average), and other resource considerations. As such, the decision about which topics, themes, and techniques to adopt and prioritize also have logistical considerations apart from the default discursive and pedagogical positions needed to contemplate on, commit to, and carry out by the publishing and writing team.

(Counter)ideological Work

Cultural theorist Angela McRobbie (2005) refers to *ideological work* as "requiring the gathering and selecting of items for inclusion and organizing while also implementing certain technical and professional code of practice". While this definition is situated within the confines of television programming, it however can also be applied to textbook as a form of media. As such, textbook task writing can likewise be apprehended as *ideological* and *counter-ideological work* that involves the crucial decisions of what topics (and subtopics) are to be included or excluded, what issues (and sub-issues) needed priority and focus, and what discursive approaches (and sub-approaches) must be employed. This set of discursive practices is carried out and governed by certain *conventions* in textbook task design (e.g., in-house editorial policies, manual of style, table of test specifications, UNESCO framework, etc.) that form part of the "technical and professional code of practice".

(Minimal and Maximal) Definitions of Ideology

Social scientist Josefina Tayag (n.d.) defined ideology in two senses, i.e., *minimal* and *maximal*. Minimally speaking, Tayag referred to ideology as the "belief system or set of values and goals used to guide people's actions, often individually or personally held". On the other hand, she characterized ideology in the maximal sense as "a set of shared fundamental values and beliefs, a theory of man and society all aimed at defining the vision of an alternative future together with a concomitant action component". Ideology, in the maximal sense, therefore, involves the *conscious, active*, and *collective commitment* in achieving the desired alternative social arrangement. Within the context

of formulating textbook tasks, the role of ideology both in the minimal and maximal sense is observed to be influential and instrumental. In the minimal sense, ideology played a crucial role in shaping the development of the textbook tasks by the individual author, especially if apprehended on the basis of how ideology manifested in the instructional material's substantive (i.e., content/theme) and structural (i.e., format/style) dimensions. In the maximal sense, on the other hand, ideology can be potentially concretized and enacted when a critical group of textbook authors from a particular discourse community (or sub-community) mobilizes their ranks and develops a version of *counter-textbook* that will challenge the conventional template and archetype.

Likewise, ideology in its maximal sense can be applied when the textbook tasks are carried out by the learners and their interlocutors in a manner that involves their shared vision and action (Tayag, n.d.). Along this line, ideology in the maximal sense is strongly associated with the stage-by-stage process of accomplishing critical praxis, i.e., "self-reflection, reflective action, and collective reflective action" (McLaren & Crawford 2010).

While the following questions pertaining to ideology are very relevant in interrogating popular culture, xenocentrism, and 'film as text', respectively, they are however purely self-reflective and hence do not involve collective action, thereby qualifying only as ideological in the minimal sense. Nonetheless, it must also be recognized that invoking *ideological analysis* as part of media text analysis is already a crucial first step towards critical praxis given the prevailing depoliticized pedagogical culture in basic education.

> *How do the new elements purvey a different kind of <u>ideology</u> from other soap operas?* (Zarate 2015: 105)

> *How can indigenous knowledge or media help balance the influx of foreign ideas and ideologies?* (Liquigan 2016: 113)
>
> *How does a film become an ideological tool?* (Liquigan 2016: 185)

(Anti)functionalism

Content- and pedagogy-wise, some textbook tasks possess strong functionalist bias, delving mainly on how stability, consensus, and harmony are observed and maintained in media institutions. While it is important to pay serious attention to these fundamental dimensions, it is equally necessary to also (1) apprehend the realities of social contradictions and (2) challenge the unequal power structures that govern media institutions and their constitutive systems and processes. Alternatively, instead of focusing solely on the functionalist dimension of information management, the author in the case of the task below, for instance, should have also enjoined the learners to explore the issues and controversies surrounding the various facets of information and its management as a vital (and contested) *development resource*.

> *The groups will interview someone or research over the Internet about any of the following government agencies/institutions: PIA, NTC, DOST-ICT, PCOO. Questions should be geared toward asking about the role of the agency in promoting information management in the country.* (Liquigan 2016: 119)

A critico-discursive perspective is necessary in revealing the "universal structures underlying the surface differences of apparent randomness of cultures, stories, and media text" (Branston & Stafford 2010). For instance, a critical scrutiny of the seeming differences in terms of codes and conventions among *mainstream(ed) texts* would reveal apparent commonalities that are reflective of the same underlying political and

cultural ideology that they all together represent. Conceivably, this is also the case when we critically look at specific media forms such as commercial advertisements and video games that only manifest "surface differences" but are proven to be a cut from the same cloth, so to speak. A critico-structural perspective will also allow the students to apprehend the overt and covert connections between (1) the text and the context (critical discourse analysis), (2) the substructure and the superstructure (political economy), and (3) the self and the society (sociological imagination).

(Counter)values and (Counter)frames

Media literacy education is essentially *value-laden*. Apprehending it in this light will allow the students to realize how their own value system shapes the media products they create (and co-create) as well as consume (and co-consume). It will also enable them to determine whether media contents conform with or deviate from local values and aspirations. Likewise, it will guide them in critically identifying and analyzing what values are privileged or subdued in the politico-communicative processes of media creation, circulation, and consumption. In the following questions, the textbook authors sought to surface the *values* and *counter-values* that are embodied and are also clashing in the advertisements and newscasts in terms of representation, privileging, and the hidden cultural logic behind the chronology.

> *Should global news be on ground level showing* footages of death and destruction*? What values is gained by the producer/consumer of graphic news that show death and destruction?* (Campos 2016: 76)

> *By explicitly stating values, did these advertisements mute other values?* (Campos 2016: 80)

Does the ad conform to contemporary Filipino cultural values? (Alagaran 2019: 142)

After close examination and analysis, convey now the values implicitly underpinning the chronology of today's news telecast. (Zarate 2016: 93)

Media and Sports

In a culminating task formulated by Liquigan (2016: 119), the students are assigned to produce an audio-visual presentation that will feature the Philippine sports breakthroughs and underscore the importance of sports development. The task posited that sports is a field that "lacks media attention" in the community and that "sports news is normally written for sports aficionados thus failing to capture a greater audience". This media production task specifically aims to (1) mainstream sports reporting in media, (2) correct the elitist perception about sports, and (3) promote the understanding and appreciation of the less subscribed fields of sports. By apprehending sports from the ethical and place-oriented standpoint, the audio-visual presentation about sports must therefore be rendered as *gender-fair* and *culturally sensitive* and should also possess strong *community rootedness* (e.g., through the popularization of inclusive and indigenous games). Crucial also in this enabling media advocacy is incorporating the health (*kalusugan*) and wellness (*kaginhawahan*) dimensions of sports.

In another culminating activity in a subsequent Unit, the students are tasked this time to create a "homepage and a site map for an online sports magazine" intended for local sports aficionados (Liquigan 2016: 209). However, the task should have been rendered consistent with the earlier framework that challenges the elitist and misplaced notion of viewing sports as an exclusive preserve of athletes and enthusiasts.

> *Your task is to create a short video presentation featuring Philippine sports milestones and highlighting the need for sports in the Philippines. Your audiences are young children ages 12-15 to nurture their interest toward sports and to clarify misconceptions about less popular sports.* (Liquigan 2016: 119)

> *"If you happen to be into sports as an athlete, analyst or a fan, prepare a homepage and a site map for an online sports magazine dedicated to local sports aficionados like you."* (Liquigan 2016: 209)

Media and Tourism

Quite commonly, textbook tasks require students to employ their acquired skills and competencies in media and information literacy to promote local travel and tourism. Among these initiatives are adapting sample voice scripts in the specific context (i.e., unique value proposition) of a local tourist destination (Yuvienco 2017: 129), promoting local tourism through a photo essay (Cantor 2019: 265), interviewing local tourists for a radio talk show (Cantor 2019: 268), and contemplating on the use of a personal camera to boost the local tourism enterprise (Magpile 2016: 119). However, there was no attempt to apprehend tourism from the critical perspective, considering the issues and debates that it entails as a business practice in the culture industry. From the critical outlook, greater effort must be exerted in making deeper sense of tourism as a social practice and in employing media and information literacy to serve the industry's social, ethical, and ecological ends.

The task that comes closest to being analytical and evaluative is the one conceptualized by Zarate (2016: 51) which seeks to assess the innovations in the codes and conventions employed by a tourism infomercial of a government agency in contentiously depicting and showcasing the Philippines as a "product".

> *What are the codes and conventions used in advertising that are applied in this short infomercial?* (Zarate 2016: 51)
>
> *How does it represent the Philippines, the "product" it is trying to sell?* (Zarate 2016: 51)
>
> *Did the media creators introduce innovations to the established codes and conventions of advertising?* (Zarate 2016: 51)

The long-standing business model that is conventionally being employed in valuing, mediating, and rendering the *place* is now being challenged by the ecological and community-oriented praxis of *critical tourism.* Consistent with the discourse of suspicion, critical tourism seeks to *challenge* and *change* the traditionally commercialized and disruptive attributes of its mainstream counterpart (i.e., mass tourism). It likewise supports alternative perspectives, policies, and practices that are promotive of (1) job and justice, (2) economy and equity as well as (3) sustainability and social welfare.

News Values and Biases

Substance-wise, the seven news values that guide newsmakers and news gatekeepers are (1) timeliness, (2) proximity, (3) impact, (4) prominence, (5) oddity, (6) relevance, and (7) conflict. However, the overarching (and underlying) consideration about all these news values is from whose contending points of view are they being perceived as such (e.g., prominence from whose perspective; impact from whose experience, relevance from whose valuation, etc.). A storyline about land-grabbing which is timely, close, impactful, prominent, distinct, relevant, and dialectical in relation to the rural poor but is not appreciated in the same light by mainstream journalists, news editors, and media owners is less likely to land the newspaper, much less the headline

story. Relatedly, the same set of criteria may also be applicable when conceptualizing and formulating textbook tasks. Within this context, the instantiation of Zarate (2016: 90-91) to analyze a news story about the chronic poverty of farm workers in Central Luzon and then to require the learners to critically inquire about the contending discourses on poverty and underdevelopment can be considered as timely, close, impactful, prominent, distinct, relevant, and dialectical from the vantage point of the peasant class, the progressive social movement, and the politically conscious group of learners. In the questions that follow, the students were asked to reflect on (1) the perceptions of the readers based on their respective positionalities, (2) the discourses that are being represented and privileged in the news article, (3) the institutionalized power differences between social groups in the rural society, and (4) the superordinate causes of chronic poverty. Plausibly, this set of guide questions is also appropriate in news stories that deal with other intense struggles over resources and claim rights such as mega-dam construction, transnational mining, sand quarrying, land-use conversion, crop conversion, mass tourism, beach resort operation, and trawl fishing, among others.

> *Who will identify with this story? Who will agree with this story? Who will disagree?* (Zarate 2016: 90-91)

> *What point-of-view is being depicted? Whose point of view is dominant in the news story?* (Zarate 2016: 90-91)
>
> *What does this story tell me about how people live or how other people view or treat other people?* (Zarate 2016: 90-91)
>
> *What points-of-views or others are absent or simply not part of this story?"* (Zarate 2016: 90-91)
>
> *Do you agree with the premises of the main informant – that persistent poverty is largely due to breeding large families?* (Zarate 2016: 90-91)

Anglo-Saxon (Non)conformism

Strikingly, *Anglo-Saxon conformity* is one of the social norms and ideological patterns that dominates mainstream media and education. Through annexation and globalization, this cultural trend extends to many national territories, including the Philippines. Globally and locally, the dominant narrative surrounding terrorism, as a case in point, remains centered on the Anglo-Saxon standpoint and this effectively marginalizes the perspectives of the victims of the hegemon's *wars of aggression*, aptly labelled by critical scholars as "imperialist wars" (Chossudovsky 2014) and "long war against humanity" (Falk 2015). Within this context, language, media, and education are methodically utilized to perpetuate the prevailing storyline by the power elites from the Global North and their local conspirators in the Global South. As such, critical sociolinguistics, critical media studies, and critical literacies must be recognized as complementarily useful in fostering and strengthening (1) Third World solidarities, (2) development justice movements as well as (3) indigenous epistemologies. Correspondingly, the initiatives of Campos (2016) in introducing the students to alternative news media and in engendering the critical apprehension of western-oriented narratives embody the *patriotic, post-colonial,* and *anti-imperialist pedagogy* (decolonial praxis). This set of queries can also guide the learners in interrogating how media organizations from various ideological persuasions represent and mediate the ethico-moral issues of public interest such as propaganda war, ethnic prejudice, human rights violations, and the culture of impunity.

Why are there differences in the kind of war images shown between American media and Al Jazeera? Does opposition to America mean alliance with terrorism? (Campos 2016: 76)

If Al Jazeera presents different news from what American media present, what are the implications of having access to both sources of information? (Campos 2016: 77)

Global-Local Dynamics (and Dialectics)

The influence and impact of the globalization of media vary across cultures and societies as reflected by the diverse issues foregrounded in the textbook tasks, i.e., (1) westernization of culture, (2) globalization of news, and (3) glocalization of global television programs (see below). In this sense, tasks with *politics* as the *dimensional focus* will enable the learners to reflect and problematize the *power relations* involved in their experience with foreign media (i.e., politics of media effects), the transmission mechanism of global news (i.e., politics of news distribution), and the privileging of the global over the local and vice versa (i.e., politics of recognition). This emphasis on the *political* dimension in apprehending media texts is critical in both the *personal* and *public lives* of individuals as media consumers, especially in asserting their individual and collective identity, agency, and autonomy.

Which foreign cultures have you been exposed to through media that are totally different from your own cultural context but you have accepted as "normal"? (Campos 2016: 94)

Where do local news programs usually get the global news that they disseminate locally? (Campos 2016: 77)

Try to seek out by closely watching these global programs (e.g., Big Brother) as adopted by local television the local (i.e., Filipino) elements that are foregrounded. (Zarate 2016: 57)

By and large, there is an observable weakness in introducing the students to the skill of reflecting on and situating the local narratives in the broader global terrain (i.e., international political economy), except for the above-cited textbook tasks by Campos (2016) and Zarate (2016). Within this context, there is a pressing need for the learners to develop the skill of perceptively connecting the local and the global and to make a deeper political sense of this *complex nexus*, especially if it involves wide power asymmetries (i.e., disparate exchange in trade, subservient foreign policy, and unequal military relations). Through this pair of reflective questions by Campos (2016), the cultural dominance of global media is thereby presented for interrogation and analysis.

> *If American media exert more global influence, reach more nations, and are trusted and taken as credible by more people around the world, what are the implications of Schechter's charges?* (Campos 2016: 77)

> *Which global media agencies exert influence on local media and the Philippine public?* (Campos 2016: 77)

Change(less) and Choice(less)

Within the business context, change is commonly conceived and applied in its *incremental* degree and not in the *revolutionary* or *radical* sense. In his reflection questions, Campos (2016) insinuated this critical insight and pointed out that businesses thrive in introducing "little innovations" and relying instead on the illusion of choice guilefully crafted by commercial marketers and advertisers. This explains why the pattern of rendering tends to orient more towards conservatism and the reactionary tradition. Questions of this nature will allow the learners to interrogate the orthodox notions of choice and change as observed in the commercial realm. From the critical

vantage point, this set of perceptive questions (see below) is also applicable when extended and articulated within the context of the dysfunctional Philippine political and electoral system given its similar reactionary attribute and concomitant 'myth of choice'.

In his prelude, Campos (2016: 66) established the prevailing prohibitive cost of "airtime and column space" in mainstream media and, in relation to this, he then asked if individuals and institutions "will tend to invest on messages that will be very different from dominant messages or more of the same". To problematize the pattern of homogenization, Campos (2016: 66) also inquired if the "risk of cost and investment predispose competing media companies to capitalize on difference or sameness". This task lets the students to critically ponder whether the risks involved in the act of investing leads to more heterogeneity or homogeneity of products and services. This then points to the illusion of choice that the willing but unsuspecting media consumers have long been exposed and accustomed to. His follow-up reflection question asking the learners about the implications of smaller business entities failing to afford the skyrocketing cost of advertisements underscores the grossly inequitable character of the commercial sector (i.e., cut-throat competition). The illusion of choice in the marketplace continues to obscure and dull the public consciousness and, accordingly, this marketing strategy is reinforced through the methodical use and placement of mind-conditioning commercial advertisements. Probing questions such as those featured below will help the learners understand the complex network and unholy alliance of business forces (i.e., commercial enterprises, media organizations, and marketing and advertising firms) that dominate the economy, influence the government, and manipulate the consuming public.

How is the success of a business dependent on the little innovations overtime rather than on one-time big inventions? (Campos 2016: 34)

Does the risk of cost and investment predispose competing major companies to capitalize on difference or sameness? (Campos 2016: 66)

Can startup companies, perhaps with better products or services, compete with those that can buy prime airtime? (Campos 2016: 67)

If two rival companies introduce little innovations that have practically the same function on the technology, what do you think would be the determiners for success of one company over the other? (Campos 2016: 34)

Representation (and Misrepresentation)

Media is commonly perceived as a "conveyor belt of meaning between the world and audiences, producing images about or from this or that debate, event, or place" (Branston & Stafford 2010). However, media in reality do not act as mere channel of messages. As such, media must be apprehended instead as a cultural agent performing an active role in (re)presenting, (re)creating as well as (re)configuring social realities. Similarly, this is also reflected in the case of textbook task when it mediates, represents, and renders social realities through the communicative practices and discursive processes of (1) ordering themes and topics, (2) privileging values and voices, (3) positioning the learners and their interlocutors, (4) situating the localities and communities, (5) formulating questions and instructions, (6) instantiating cases and contexts, (7) framing the broader social climate, and (8) interposing interventions and strategies.

Masterman (1989) pointed out that *representation* is the "central unifying concept of media education", arguing further that "media do not reflect but re-present the world".

As a specific form of media, textbooks perform the same function based on how the authors as active agents project and communicate their ideas and insights about the *socio-material world*. Overtly or covertly, such is manifested in the manner textbook lessons as well as academic tasks and learning activities are designed, formulated, and put together as a *coherent whole*. Within the context of this research, *representation* pertains to (1) how the social and sectoral issues were depicted and instantiated as cases and contexts in the textbook tasks as well as (2) what interventions and initiatives were interposed to unpack and act upon the former.

Regarding the issue of rampant misrepresentation of marginalized groups and subgroups in mainstream news reporting and advertisement, the following portrayal are highlighted and instantiated by the textbook authors for critical analysis: pattern of similarities in the depiction of gender, ethnicity, race, age, and religion (Alagaran 2019: 92); "inaccurate representations of Filipino women, religious groups, or cultural communities" (Alagaran 2019: 91); privileged and muted perspectives in the representations (Alagaran 2019: 92); traditional portrayal of the poor (Campos 2016: 62); common perception of the public on how women are represented (Zarate 2016: 86); perpetuation of the dominant "image and beauty standard" (Zarate 2016: 95); consequences of how "other races, ethnicities, genders, classes and social groups" are represented (Campos 2016: 104); use of "politically charged labels, adjectives and verbs" (Alagaran 2019: 141); and use or non-use of "politically correct and gender-sensitive language" (Alagaran 2019: 141). Such set of diverse but interconnected approaches and renderings can be generally categorized into the following:
(1) consistency in the pattern of representation/misrepresentation across social

variables, (2) consequences of the representation/misrepresentation, and (3) use of language to discriminate or empower marginalized groups. However, in accordance with the action-oriented attribute of critical praxis, the interventions and initiatives must also include proposing concrete and actionable measures to counter and tackle misrepresentation, hatred, and prejudice, especially in the structural and collective level.

> *What advertisement have you seen portray inaccurate representations of Filipino women, religious groups, or cultural communities? Why do you think they are inaccurate?* (Alagaran 2019: 91)

> *Why must the recipient of the prizes be portrayed as needy and poor? Is there anything wrong with this typical portrayal?* (Campos 2016: 62)

> *What are the beauty and image standards that are being perpetuated in television, print, radio, and Internet right now?" How does it affect me? Have I undertaken some behavioral changes as a response to these media and information texts?*
> (Zarate 2016: 95)

An interdisciplinary task requiring the students to produce a short video demonstration of a family recipe that they learned from their "grandmother, mother, or aunt" is notable in promoting local family heritage and healthy food culture (Yuvienco 2017: 132). However, this may also be perceived as gender stereotyping because of the tendency to associate cooking exclusively to women. The instruction regarding the choice of resource persons could have been rendered as gender neutral instead.

(Re)presentation and Resistance

In agreement, media education scholar David Buckingham (2019) underscored that the conceptual emphasis in the creative and critical formulation and production of course requirements must center on "representation". Representation within the

parameter of this research pertains to the academic tasks and learning activities that "break with the norm or address underrepresented groups or issues" (Buckingham 2019). The “norm” in this case refers to the conventional approaches to knowledge acquisition while the “underrepresented groups or issues” in the Philippine context would conceivably pertain to the compelling development debates and the social sectors involved that are not foregrounded in mainstream media and education such as (1) land dispossession of peasant communities, (2) dislocation of indigenous peoples from their ancestral land, and (3) economic displacement of municipal fisherfolks from their sources of livelihood. It is against this background that the researcher commends the textbook tasks of Zarate (2016: 89-91) that featured the reality of peasant poverty (in Central Luzon) and of Campos (2016: 60 and 108) that presented the issues confronting the national minorities (in Mindoro and Mindanao) as well as the municipal fisherfolks in rural communities in their respective media text analyses and self-reflection exercises.

Marginality and Subalternity

Subaltern groups experience a ‘double whammy’ when they get exposed to the injustices of the social systems and get victimized at the same time by inaccurate and unfair media representation. In this sense, the role of media education becomes even more pressing and indispensable.

In an effort to mainstream the development agenda of the marginalized, Campos (2016: 68) put forth a task that interrogates the crowding out of the “pressing social issues” from the media agenda and public consciousness. This issue is parallel with the

situation instantiated by the same author about the case of an oppressive corporation that can afford expensive media mileage to marginalize (and drown out) the voice of the workers it exploits and extracts profit from.

> *Can pressing social issues that have to do with the disenfranchised like thousands of displaced farmers, abused overseas workers, trafficked women and children, victims of ongoing war ever occupy prime airtime, column space, and public consciousness the way Roliet or gruesome crimes and sex scandals do?* (Campos 2016: 68)

> *What are the implications if an exploitative company can afford airtime and column space, but the people that this company exploits cannot afford the same media means to be heard?* (Campos 2016: 68)

In the case studies of Cantor (2019), a long list of individuals and groups who have been marginalized and stereotyped in many television episodes, commercial advertisements, and mainstream films was instantiated to let the learners reflect about the prevailing *decadent* and *depraved values* in the commercial media industry. Among the common victims of stereotypes and subjects of ridicule are the "dark-skinned people", "people with speaking disabilities", and "people regarded as average in looks, singles, gays" (Cantor 2019: 226 and 231). Correspondingly, in Cantor's (2019: 277-278) narrative and documentary film tasks, she instantiated the following individuals and groups as prospective subjects for media production: youth groups, students, persons with disabilities, parents, overseas Filipino workers, athletes, victims of bullying, teachers, workers, LGBT, artists, and senior citizens. Observably, these segments and sectors in the society are vulnerable to various forms of structural, systemic, and symbolic violence such as discrimination, exclusion, marginalization, misrepresentation, oppression, objectification, and subservience. In alignment with her strong social justice

orientation, Cantor could have also straightforwardly foregrounded the praxis of resistance (*pagbalikwas*) and empowerment (*pagsasakapangyarihan*) as the main theme of media production. This proposed discursive counter-imperative is consistent with Max Horkheimer's conception of the critical theory that must possess altogether the mutually reinforcing attributes of being *explanatory, normative,* and *emancipatory*.

Hegemony and Hierarchy

Comprehensively, the textbook tasks were able to capture various expressions and embodiments of social hierarchies in the Philippine development realities and among these are the following: "precarious lives of disenfranchised cave miners" (Campos 2016: 68), "persistent poverty" among the peasants (Zarate 2016: 91), structural violence experienced by the indigenous people (Campos 2016: 108-109, 115-121), startup companies being marginalized in terms of airtime and exposure (Campos 2016: 67), "knowledge monopoly" (Campos 2016: 38), literacy gap (Campos 2016: 38), unequal power over and access to new technologies and inventions (Campos 2016: 33), privileged and muted stories (Cantor 2019: 258), contestants "portrayed as needy and poor" (Campos 2016: 62), and the hegemonic and subdued voices (Campos 2016: 105). Given the cases and contexts enumerated above, the manifestations of social hierarchy can therefore be classified based on their economic, technological, political, and symbolic dimensions. Based on this list, Campos (2016) has shown to consistently particularize as well as connect both the *economic* (substructure) and *non-economic* (superstructure) dimensions of marginalization throughout his textbook tasks.

> *Research also on how the Lumad are being displaced by land-grabbing, illegal mining, and militarization of their home places.* (Campos 2016: 115)

> *What is the implication of this knowledge monopoly for the rest of the community who could not read or write?* (Campos 2016: 38)

> *Which story angles did I prioritize, and which one did I exclude? Why did I make those choices?* (Cantor 2019: 258)

> *What are we explicitly saying in the media message, and what are we silencing, or silent about?* (Campos 2016: 105)

In problematizing how the privileged sectors and segments are portrayed and represented in media and society, Campos (2016: 62) this time asked the learners to reflect about the authenticity of the media's social construction of the identities of television and movie "stars". The same can be also said with Zarate's (2016: 47-48) attempt to inquire the students about the "implications of reporting on military operation" based on how the state's defense establishment was depicted in relation to its socio-ideological and politico-military adversaries. This question also involves evaluating the "objectivity displayed by the writer of the story" and determining if all sides and perspectives were fairly presented, thereby underscoring the complexity and multidimensionality of the issue in question (Zarate 2016: 48).

> *Who are the stars? Do we really know who they are beyond their media-constructed identities?* (Campos 2016: 62)

> *Can we trust that the stars we know through the television or the movies are who they appeared to be?* (Campos 2016: 62)

> *"What are the implications of reporting on military operations against the Bangsamoro?"* (Zarate 2016: 47-48)

Information and Knowledge Monopoly

As a prelude to a set of reflective questions, Campos (2016) invoked the argument of political economist Harold Innis that "each medium creates its own knowledge monopoly", citing that only the "religious elites" as a case in point possessed the literacy skills when the system of writing first emerged in history. This social reality of unequal access and control over knowledge resources appeared over time in many knowledge systems and regimes, encompassing the interconnected stages of creation, circulation, and consumption. Questions of this nature are instrumental in making critical sense of the recurring pattern of monopolies that manifests and perpetuates each time a new knowledge and media system emerges and develops. The following guide questions highlight this institutionalized power difference in the context of the so-called 'information and knowledge-industrial complex'.

> *What was the implication of this knowledge monopoly for the rest of the community who could not read or write?* (Campos 2016: 38)

> *"What was the relationship of the few who could read and write and the many who could not?"* (Campos 2016: 38)

Media Power and Control

Media and information literacy has an important role to play in the socialization of learners in becoming responsible political communicators and community actors. As such, it must enable the students to examine and understand what are truly pressing development issues and which of them are of global, national, or local level of interests. Many social and sectoral issues, in fact, do not form part of the typical conversations in

families and schools. The role of media and education, therefore, becomes indispensable in initiating critical conversations and debates. By performing this *informational* and *political* function, media and education then become instrumental in mainstreaming development and policy issues in the public consciousness, especially among the youth.

More particularly, through the textbook tasks in media and information literacy, learners are afforded the opportunity to apprehend and problematize the prevailing and multifarious media and information disorders such as "click bait" (Yuvienco 2017: 45), "untruths" (Campos 2016: 26), "thought control" (Campos 2016: 26), historical manipulation (Campos 2016: 27), state control of media (Magpile 2016: 14), "fallacies" (Liquigan 2016: 115), "hidden motives" (Liquigan 2016: 115), social decadence (Zarate 2016: 96), and "troll bots" (Yuvienco 2017: 25-26), among others. These media and information dysfunctions are threats to the people's collective well-being and the nation's moral future by undermining truth, reason, autonomy, agency, and historical sensibility.

> *Have you been hooked by a recent piece of news online via click bait?* (Yuvienco 2017: 45)

> *Do you think the media has disseminated untruths and asserted forms of thought control, in the manner of, but not necessarily as blatant as 2 + 2 = 5?* (Campos 2016: 26)

> *What are the means by which media and information texts from television, print, radio and the internet glorify negative behaviors?* (Zarate 2016: 96)

> *Troll bot is one powerful technology tool that divides and controls population by triggering negative biases in terms of ethnicity, gender, age, etc. How does one address hatred that is generated or amplified by bots?* (Yuviencio 2017: 25-26)

In addition to the pressing socio-technological issues covered above, textbook authors must also incorporate the evolving "pathological challenges in information and communication" to make the students become fully aware of the dysfunctions' ever increasing level of complexity and, correspondingly, the public's growing degree of vulnerability, i.e., intrinsic bias of machine learning, digital distraction, digital diversion, commodification of the user, and weaponization of information and communication, among others (Ong & Cabañes 2018, Flor 2022). Aside from exposing and problematizing this set of media and information disorders, there is also a need to enjoin the learners in proposing sustainable solutions that employ intersectoral, interdisciplinary, and interprofessional approach. Considering the problems' level of seriousness, the questions in the textbook tasks must then be re-oriented towards (1) identifying and holding the social forces behind the media and information dysfunctions accountable (i.e., media responsibility), (2) countering these media and information pathologies by employing multi-pronged and multistakeholder strategies (i.e., *media education* to heighten public consciousness, *media regulation* to protect public interest, and *moral reform* to fight cultural decadence), and (3) proposing an alternative communication and information order (i.e., media and communication activism).

Disinformation and Misinformation

Disinformation and misinformation undermine the people's social fabric and the nation's democratic ideals, institutions, and processes. In confronting these information dysfunctions, textbook authors interposed various courses of action and modes of

intervention, i.e., making sense of disinformation and misinformation by developing one's own definition based on personal experience (Liquigan 2016: 34), enumerating hoaxes and cases of misinformation that circulated in/through media (Campos 2016: 4), identifying the "potential dangers of misinformation and disinformation" (Liquigan 2016: 34), apprehending the role of ethics in preventing disinformation and misinformation (Liquigan 2016: 34), and reflecting on the role of media in a democratic society and in the era of "post-truth" (Yuvienco 2017: 23). To combat information pathologies, Cantor (2019: 208) also requires students to explore a list of fake websites that "mimics legitimate" online sources to expose what she appropriately calls as "merchants of misinformation". In addition, she also provides a set of guidelines to uncover "fake news websites appearing as legitimate ones". Complementarily, an effective approach in promoting critical media literacy is introducing the students to the various propaganda techniques (e.g., cherry picking, glittering generalities, over-simplification, etc.) that are commonly and cunningly employed in "pushing a particular bias or agenda in a message", similar with the one instantiated by Liquigan (2015: 111). In relation to this, Liquigan (2015) also proposed the following materials to better make sense of how the strategic use of propaganda advances and mainstreams particular ideologies: (1) Stanford's media's use of propaganda to persuade people's attitudes, belief, and behavior, (2) Truthout's 14 propaganda techniques Fox "news" uses to brainwash Americans, and (3) McGraw Hill Higher Education's finding fallacies.

The above-cited interventions and initiatives can be classified into the following and each one with its own contribution in effectively dealing with disinformation and misinformation: (1) definition and sense-making, (2) risk identification and precaution,

and (3) critical reflection and resistance. Definition and sense-making are important in particularizing and understanding disinformation and misinformation based on the learners' lived experiences and living encounters. Risk identification and precaution help in avoiding or reducing harm associated with these broad range of information pathologies. Lastly, critical reflection and resistance embody the process of *concretization* and *collectivization* to attain critical praxis.

The learning activities by Campos (2016: 4) that center on hoaxes cannot be more applicable than in today's era of massive disinformation and misinformation. By asking the students about how "particular historical contexts…have to do with believability of the hoaxes", the learners will be able to analyze the historical conditions, social forces, and political dynamics that brought about and perpetuated the widespread and deep-rooted deceptions. His question inquiring the students about what media forms could mount hoaxes with the same effect as those of the past will afford the learners to profoundly reflect on (1) the conspirators' believability, (2) the public's credulity, and, most importantly, (3) the complex set of interacting social factors upon which this dysfunctional pattern of collective behavior is predicated.

> *What other similar hoaxes are you familiar with that have been disseminated in the last five years? Or, if not exactly hoaxes, what misinformation has been circulated in media and taken as fact?* (Campos 2016: 5)

Hoaxes tend to perpetuate further when even the supposed educated individuals and groups believe and espouse these outright lies and half-truths. Given the social, symbolic, and cultural capital that they possess, some unprincipled intellectuals also lend credence to the faster spread of disinformation, thereby rendering those within their

sphere of influence with already poor level of media and information literacy more vulnerable and at risk.

Under the regime of widespread and methodical disinformation, the critical skills of analyzing media texts and evaluating information sources through media education become even more crucial in protecting the democratic rights of the public in accessing credible and reliable news and information.

Trustworthy news and truthful information are critical building blocks in establishing and sustaining a *democratic* and *developed society*. The instructive question below that invokes national hero and propagandist Jose Rizal possesses a very powerful message regarding the use of information literacy in confronting structural challenges and issues then and more so now, to wit:

> *In referring to the social task of "fighting a great deal to defeat the enemy (colonizers)", how does Rizal conceive off "fighting" as a form of information literacy?* (Campos 2016: 152)

(Im)balanced News and Views

Citing the issue of "imbalanced news", Campos (2016: 72) also expressed his deep concern about how media renders its reportage as too mainstreamed (and hence uncritical and undiscerning) and how it seeks to prioritize sensationalized news stories. He was specifically pertaining to the Vhong Navarro's case which was given over-extended coverage at the expense of the more pressing national and local development and policy issues, thereby compromising media autonomy and the public's right to information. Questions pertaining to this lopsided reporting allow the students

as critical media consumers to understand that the news which end up being aired and disseminated are, in fact, products of a complex process of vetting and power play. It also affords them to reflect about the negative implications of the public developing greater interest on issues involving celebrities than on matters of serious social and sectoral concerns.

> *Is the treatment of the (Vhong) Navarro case on television an isolated case or do powerful media companies commit variations of this imbalance all the time? If this same piece of news dominated media for several days, pushing off more important issues of national concern what wrong has been committed?* (Campos 2016: 72-73)

> *"What are the implications if people have knowledge of, opinion on, and strong feelings regarding the (Vhong) Navarro case but not about the Mindanao peace process, the plight of the inhabitants of Agham Road and overseas workers, and the freedom of information bill?* (Campos 2016: 73)

Risk and Hazard

Mainstream (read: 'lamestream') mass media has rendered the vulnerable public as *ideological captives*, depriving them of the *agency* and *autonomy* to critically analyze and evaluate media contents, structures, and processes. Through the homogenous messages that orthodox media convey and propagate, the public are made to wrongly assume that there is no alternative and viable communication and information order to challenge and replace the mainstream arrangement. This hegemonic relationship places the public in a compromised position of *ignorance, vulnerability, fear, superficiality*, and even *addiction*.

Correspondingly, the concern about risk and hazard may be attributed to the *ambivalent view* towards media (i.e., media's good and bad side) as well as the

protectionist stance against it (i.e., mainstream media's association with many forms of social dysfunctions). Among the potential hazards associated with media that are foregrounded in the textbook tasks and that are used as bases for self-reflection and textual analyses are the following: risks connected with one's own created and disseminated media content (Campos 2016: 82), overdependence on "crowdsourced information" (Liquigan 2016: 140), "use of multimedia presentations…reportedly dumbing down students" (Liquigan 2016: 205), "cyberthreats" (Alagaran 2019: 113), pitfalls in using "social media site/app" (Campos 2016), "abuse and misuse of media and information" (Magpile 2016: 95), "format and content of government-controlled channel" (Zarate 2016: 123), and "harsh (or draconian)" provisions of the cybercrime law (Liquigan 2016: 94). From this comprehensive lineup, the potential risks and hazards can then be categorized as those that originate from (1) oneself, (2) other individuals, (3) private institutions, and, most worryingly, (4) state agencies. Zarate (2016) and Liquigan's (2016) instantiations of the culpability of the government in putting the public welfare in great peril underscore the state's propensity to abuse power and authority.

> *How can cybercrime restrict the free flow of information? List down the provisions on the Philippine Cybercrime Law that are deemed too harsh (or draconian) by those against the law.* (Liquigan 2016: 94)

> *Tune in to at least NBN program featuring government events. Using the programs format and content of this government owned and controlled channel as specimen, cite the limitations—and even dangers—that it can potentially pose to public interest.* (Zarate 2016: 123)

Against this backdrop, critical media literacy will enable students to analyze and

examine media and information dysfunctions by interrogating (1) the associated risks to which the vulnerable sectors are exposed, (2) the underlying motives of the social forces behind the media and information pathologies, and (3) the interventions and initiatives in countering the media abuse and misuse.

> *Who will be at risk if the power of media and information is abused and misused?* (Magpile 2016: 95)
>
> *Why do people abuse the power of media and information?* (Magpile 2016: 95)
>
> *How can we prevent the abuse and misuse of media and information?* (Magpile 2016: 95)
>
> *What are some of the cyberthreats? How do you intend to overcome them?"* (Alagaran 2019: 117)

Disturbingly, people now live in a *surveillance society* where closed-circuit televisions (CCTVs) are instrumentalized by the business/government sector against its own customers/citizens. The same can be said with the so-called '*dataveillance society*' where the data/metadata that were monitored and mined from the unsuspecting public are employed to strategically target them as prospective consumers or are weaponized to undermine their democratic rights and interests.

Interestingly, media technologies are perceived with ambivalent and contradictory positions. The positive regard is identified with the myriad of benefits that these technological resources offer while the negative perception is associated with the set of dysfunctions that they bring about as consequences – intentionally or otherwise, to wit:

- Advantages and disadvantages of media and information use (Alagaran 2019: 24)

- Advantages and disadvantages of technology (Liquigan 2016: 106)
- Benefits and pitfalls of *wikis* as information sources (Liquigan 2016: 106)
- Media technology's effect on enhancing or deteriorating people's memory (Campos 2016: 9)
- Ambivalence of media message (Campos 2016: 105)
- Ethics (i.e., rightness or wrongness) of cybercrime law (Liquigan 2016: 94)

Consistent with the discourse of suspicion, the questions must ultimately reveal the social groups to whom media and technology are most beneficial or detrimental. Such inquiry can only be decidedly answered when the powerful social forces controlling the media resources and technologies are identified and unmasked. The questions that follow underscore the fact that media resources and technologies are *not* neutral devices and hence they serve a particular class interest and sectoral agenda.

> *Who benefited the most when the new invention became a social necessity? Which authority, institution or investment was magnified when the new invention became necessary?* (Campos 2016: 33)

> *Who was at the losing end when it became a social necessity? Which authority, institution or investment was threatened when the new invention became necessary?* (Campos 2016: 33)

Campos (2016: 30-31) started a textbook task subsection with the question "what makes innovators?". Given the illustrations he provided, the apparent and obvious answer to this question would conceivably be the *socio-environmental context* where the innovators and inventors are situated. This points to the importance of apprehending the critical role of the *place* in the social practice of inventing and

innovating. In one of the questions, for instance, the same author also foregrounded the successful innovations within the context of the technologists' humble origin. This reinforces the central role of the place's *material dimension* (materiality) in shaping the development of locally rooted and culturally responsive inventions and innovations.

Campos' approach is effective in mainstreaming dialectics in his discursive instantiations and interpositions. Through his trademark socio-philosophical questions, Campos succeeded in framing alternative discourse about invention as a *knowledge product*. According to him, "the dissemination of an invention is not always premised on benefitting the society", arguing further that "different groups of people wage figurative and literal battles to make an invention a social necessity or to stop one from being such" (Campos 2016: 33). Eventually, when new media technology emerges (i.e., printing press) the "older knowledge monopolies" cease to operate paving the way for the "social forces…to form new knowledge monopolies" (Campos 2016: 33). Through these reflective questions, students will be able to realize that new inventions bring about *winners* and *losers* when these products become "social necessities" and that people vary greatly in their level of access and control over these highly-coveted economic, technological, and cultural resources.

The discourse on hazard and how it relates to media use bode well with Buckingham's (2019) exposition on media education's "defensive/protectionist" stance against media abuse and misuse. While it is true that the risk and harm associated with media exposure are legitimate issues, educators as well as parents should not do away with media altogether in the socialization and education process of the students. And in relation to this, media pathologies must be apprehended and tackled in the structural

dimension (i.e., holding the private and public sectors accountable) and not merely in the individual realm of engagement (i.e., elevating the change agenda in the collective level) [Buckingham 2019].

Critical Political Economy

The critical framework looks broadly at the structural dimension of power and consistent with the *political economy of media* the emphasis is on how the monopoly of media ownership and control impinges on media freedom and responsibility. Through the adoption of critical political economy, the learners will be able to grasp how the dialectical interplay of the substructure (i.e., economic) and the superstructure (i.e., political, cultural, and moral) influences media as a constitutive social institution. In the textbook tasks instantiated by the academic authors, the following issues pertaining to the political economy of media were foregrounded for critical analysis: 'media monopoly' (Liquigan 2016: 98, Campos 2016: 68), 'duopoly' (Campos 2016: 68), 'network and ratings war' (Zarate 2016: 61), 'conglomerates and interlocking directorates' (Zarate 2016: 120), 'bureaucrat capitalism' (Zarate 2016: 122, Campos 2016: 69), 'media as business' (Zarate 2016: 111-112, Campos 2016: 64 & 67), and 'corporate sponsorships' (Campos 2016: 62). To illustrate how the *market model* operates, Zarate (2016: 111) requires the learners to account the ratio of print advertisement space in relation to that of the news content in the newspapers. Through the specific exercises featured below, the students will be trained to *quantify* the media organization's corporate revenue through commercial advertisements and *qualify* the strength of its economic, business, and political influence.

> *Try to count how many print advertisements are in the newspaper. Approximate the amount of space they occupy, probably using square inches. Express the ratio of the space occupied by news and other feature articles to the amount of space given to the print advertisements.* (Zarate 2016: 111-112)
>
> *The best time to observe is during primetime from 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM. Choose one primetime show and log in how many are the commercials and how much time each commercial spanned.* (Zarate 2016: 112)
>
> *How much would you estimate do these networks earn at a given night corresponding to a hypothetical number of advertising placements? How about on a given week, month, or year?* (Campos 2016: 67)
>
> *How is the company able to afford placing one or more 30-second media messages (P300,000/30-second airtime as of 2015) in any of these networks?* (Campos 2016: 67)

A useful approach in revealing the *interlocking directorates* of commercial media and non-media companies is the one below prescribed by Zarate (2016: 120 & 122) that requires the students to do online research about a media organization and produce an *ownership map* to identify the wide range of products and services in the market where it has business interest and involvement. Through the ownership map (i.e., sociogram), the learners will be able to identify the extent of business ownership and control (i.e., media and non-media holdings) and its negative implications to media independence and accountability. In the company profile that the students also need to research on and write about, they are required to incorporate and apply the following concepts in political economy, namely "globalization, economies of scale, horizontal and vertical integration, and synergy", in their analysis and evaluation. The application of these key constructs in the critical apprehension of how the media companies operate will reveal the range of business strategies (i.e., acquisition, merger, cut-throat competition) that they employ to (1) reduce cost, (2) strengthen their market position, (3) overwhelm the competition, and (4) broaden the consumer base – most of which have

serious repercussions to smaller organizations, unsuspecting customers, vulnerable workers, and fragile ecologies.

In consonance with the discourse of suspicion, Campos (2016) also required the students to examine and compare two local media giants (i.e., duopoly) and determine the full extent of their ownership and control in terms of existing media types. The students were also asked to evaluate if these media outfits produce consistent and mutually reinforcing messages that are promotive of their economic and non-economic interests. Typical also of critical discourse analysis-related inquiries, Campos asked the students to compare the two media entities based on their news items' "language, treatment, emphases, and sequence" as well as the inclusions and omissions in their media coverage. In his attempt to unmask the political economy of media business, the students were also asked if the media owners have established "political connections" with the power wielders in the government. In the national democratic tradition, this strategy of using public power for personal gain is termed 'bureaucratic capitalism'.

> *Create an ownership map – list of the companies and products owned by these two corporations. Write a company profile of these companies, drawing into your writeup the concepts we have discussed—globalization, economies of scale, horizontal and vertical integration, and synergy.* (Zarate 2016: 120)

> *"Find out if the owners of the leading media networks have political connections like relatives, allies, and patrons."* (Campos 2016: 69)

Media conglomerates dominate the local socio-cultural landscape through their interlocking control over many media formats. Notice how a particular set of campaigns and messages (or discourses) is carried across and sustained throughout all the media

platforms whether *legacy* or *new media*. Aside from a repertoire of business schemes, private interest groups (whether media or non-media in nature) are also known to bank on their vast political networks to protect their vested economic agenda. For the longest time, the television landscape in the Philippines was described to be a *duopoly* (i.e., ABS-CBN and GMA dominance) until the former's shutdown in May 2020. The closedown, which is also fueled by intense politico-economic contradiction, however, is another but related issue that requires a separate and more nuanced analysis as a case study in the student tasks of subsequent textbook editions and publication of new titles.

Through his critical textbook tasks, Campos (2016: 62) also seeks to problematize gameshows by asking the students about the sources of prize and the motivation of the corporate advertisers and sponsors behind what others uncritically believe as an act of benevolence and goodwill. This will also allow the learners to perceptively apprehend the complex processes and strategies involved in producing a gameshow such as 'hyperreality', captive viewership, cause marketing, and corporate communication, among others.

> *Where do the prizes of television contestants and televiewers come from? Is it accurate to assume that the star is the one who generously gives away these prizes? Or do these prizes come from advertisers and sponsors?*
> (Campos 2016: 62)

> *Are these prizes given away to the needy without the stars getting anything in return? What is the relationship of the stars with the advertisers and sponsors?*
> (Campos 2016: 62)

Rightly so, there is also an insinuation in his question about the tendency of these game shows to promote *poverty pornography*. Campos then asked "why must be the

recipients of the prizes be portrayed as needy and poor" and he queried further if there is "anything wrong with this typical portrayal". This contentious entertainment culture has been practiced and normalized for so long in the media and leisure industry, thereby putting into question the authenticity of goodwill which the gameshows and their corporate advertisers and sponsors purport to project and establish.

In another set of reflective questions, Campos (2016: 62) politicized the creation of love teams by interrogating the "huge amount of time, energy, and financial resources" that are poured in not only by the entertainment companies but also by the fan base. To deepen the level of analysis and insinuate how the poor and middle-class fans shell out funds from their already meager income, Campos asked the students if "all supporters…have equal means to spend valuable resources". This perceptive question reveals that the social construction and financial viability of love teams involve the economic, temporal, and emotional investments of the fan base, underscoring how valuable resources, especially monetary, unilaterally flow from the mesmerized fans to the television/movie stars, talent agencies, and media companies.

> *Do love teams become more popular when more time, energy, and financial resources are invested on their construction? How much time, energy, and financial resources are amassed from the fans by those who construct successful love teams? Do all supporters of successful love teams have equal means to spend valuable time, energy, and financial resources as fans?* (Campos 2016: 64)

A discussion about the economic and financial dimension of media production and consumption is never complete without covering the *price* as a crucial element. Price serves as an economic determinant of access to media products and services in the market. As such, the strategy to inquire about the price of the media product is notable.

A case in point was when Cantor (2019) asked the learners to comment on the price of the media products (i.e., books, magazines, movies) – the only instance it was inquired about across all textbook titles. The question also serves as an opportunity to make the students reflect further about the implication of the price on their media preference, use, and lifestyle, especially if it becomes too prohibitive.

In one of her remarkable critical textbook tasks, Zarate (2016: 123) asked the learners to analyze television programs in a government-owned station by citing the "limitations – and even dangers – that it can potentially pose to public interest". To expose the students to the progressive application and embodiment of the *public sphere model*, Zarate (2016: 123) proposed evaluating media organizations based on how they consistently uphold public values and fulfill the people's development agenda.

> *Tune into at least two National Broadcasting Network (NBN) programs featuring government events. Using the program format and content of this government-controlled channel as specimen, cite the limitations—and even the dangers—that can potentially pose to public interest.* (Zarate 2016: 123)

> *Find other expressions of the public sphere model in our society. It could either be examples of media texts in various formats—in print, broadcast, and the Internet. Mind who are the media organizations behind these media texts. Reflect on the nature of the public interests that these messages convey…How do these media text foster democracy?* (Zarate 2016: 123)

Another noteworthy question posed by Zarate (2016: 50) that promotes critical information literacy among the learners is asking them about the implications of public sector information being "very general and details are sparse" in relation to the need to observe "transparency in government transaction". This inquiry raises the same *suspicion* and *skepticism* reflected in the previous task pertaining to the government's

commitment (or lack thereof) in practicing transparency, upholding integrity, and protecting the public interest.

> *The report cites that the analysis of documents in data were made complicated and difficult because the information is very general and details are sparse. What do these observations imply on the drive toward transparency of government transactions"* (Zarate 2016: 50).

Resistance and Counter-Resistance

A case in point of the audience's defiant reaction is "resistance to commodified information" (Campos 2016: 79) expressed through their neglectful attitude and short attention towards advertising media. Political scientist James Scott (1985) argued that the marginalized public do not fully capitulate to the dominance of social elites (i.e., mainstream media in this case). According to him, the subordinate groups (i.e., viewers in this context) resort to a *dual tactic* of showing allegiance and obedience to the dominant group (overt public behavior) but also simultaneously questioning and resisting the system of domination and oppression (covert behavior). The neglectful attitude and short attention span pointed out above can be conceived as an expression of this defiance or "everyday resistance" and 'infrapolitics' in the words of Scott (1985). Scott defined *infrapolitics* as the "forms of disguised, low-profile, undeclared resistance" by the socially excluded against the established order in an organization or in a broader development context.

Reflective of the dialectical nature of critical media pedagogy, Campos then asked the learners how the advertisers deal with this form of "everyday resistance" (Scott 1985) and still manage to continue "achieving prominence" despite this unfavorable

public reaction. This then paves the way for the author to direct his subsequent questions in problematizing social marketing and corporate social responsibility (CSR). Within this context, corporate communication serves as a means to counter scrutiny and resistance by promoting not just the companies' products and services but also their supposed 'positive values' to earn goodwill and patronage. This points to the fact how resistance is met with *counter-resistance* in the micro realm which parallels with the revolution and neoclassical counter-revolution in the macro socio-historical level. The questions below are illustrative of how advertisements that are supposedly communicating "positive messages" through "cause marketing" can also be sources of apprehension, controversy, and debate.

> *Some advertisement campaigns resort to clearly and explicitly advocating values, instead of just selling products or service. How would you characterize the tension between selling positive values and selling products?* (Campos 2016: 80)

> *By explicitly stating values, did these advertisements mute other values?* (Campos 2016: 80)

> *What are the positive and negative aspects of these advertisements?* (Campos 2016: 80)

> *Would you say that these advertisements were "scripted"? Are the people in the ads "real"?* (Campos 2016: 80)

> *To what extent would you say do these advertisements depart or question stereotypes, and to what extent do they perpetuate stereotypes?* (Campos 2016: 80)

Alternative Media

Information is a vital and strategic political resource in the development of

individuals, institutions, and communities. As such, it is necessary that media and information literacy students not only understand the variety of available information but also the contending ideological standpoints of their sources/producers.

In some textbook tasks, for instance, students are introduced to official and mainstream sources about sets of information that pertain to national and international affairs through the guide questions and reading tasks presented to them.

> *If you want to know the latest information from the Office of the President and other departments of the government, you should check the Official Gazette.* (Magpile 2016: 12).

> Modified true or false: *If you want to know the current events happening around the world, you should check cable channels, such as CNN.* (Magpile 2016: 131)

> *This website (www.nato.int) provides the speaking notes of Dr J.P. Shea, a former spokesperson of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, in a NATO seminar in 1998 at Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.* (Liquigan 2016: 27)

Accordingly, students also need to be exposed and initiated to alternative sources of information about transnational, national, and local affairs. This will allow them to examine the development issues from various frames, dimensions, and levels of analysis. Some of these alternative resources are introduced through the textbook tasks as required or supplementary reading materials. In the case of Campos (2016: 69 and 76-77), he provided Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ) and Al Jazeera as alternative media resources upon which the students will base their reflection on making critical sense of their valuable contributions in providing countervailing perspectives on pressing international relations-related issues. With

reference to PCIJ, Campos (2016) interposed this very perceptive question below about the political value of independent media organizations.

> *What kind of information will we be shielded from if such organizations did not independently construct their media messages?* (Zarate 2016: 69)

Critical media literacy is necessary in countering the inimical effects of mainstream media and education to the public's psyche and moral fabric. However, this effort must begin by allowing the learners to clearly understand first the *transgressive* and *transformative* attributes of alternative media, similar with how it is coherently instantiated and depicted in some of the instructional materials covered in this study, Along the critical tradition, alternative media is conceived by the textbook authors in the following mutually reinforcing dimensions and perspectives, i.e., a means to communicate alternative messages that may be difficult to do so in conventional media (Campos 2016: 86-87); "radical in content – political or cultural – as well as strong aesthetic form" (Atton 2001 as cited in Zarate 2016: 124-125); "in-depth, contextualized and hard-hitting" in approach (Campos 2016: 69); contains "new ideas, new forms and new outlets for creative expression" (Zarate 2016: 94); and non-mainstream that "challenges the status quo" (Zarate 2016: 94). These representations suggest that alternative content can be most effectively articulated and rendered through alternative media, presupposing that content and form must be consistent and coherent in their progressive expressions and embodiments.

In accordance with this counter-tradition, Campos (2016: 69) enjoins the learners to make a deeper sense of how "alternative media organizations" such as the Philippine

Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ) is able to commit itself to "in-depth, contextualized, and hard-hitting" reporting, which regrettably is not the norm in Philippine media's commercial mainstream. The students are also tasked to ascertain if the earlier assessment of PCIJ in 2000 about Philippine media still holds true in the contemporary context, thereby allowing them to analyze if there were positive changes that took place (i.e., *development*), if the condition remained much of the same (i.e., *status quo*), or if the situation only worsened (i.e., *deterioration* and *decay*).

> *"If you have access to PCIJ's assessments of 1990s and 2000s Philippine media, compare if their findings and observations are still true today."* (Campos 2016: 69)

Meanwhile, in another task by Zarate (2016: 94), she asked the students to interview independent media creators about how they struggled to produce and disseminate films despite the limitations posed by (1) financial constraint, (2) crowding out effects of mainstream films, and (3) the restrictive conventional platforms. Through this task, Zarate (2016) was able to highlight how alternative artists assert their presence to "push for new ideas, new forms and new outlets" and "challenge the status quo" despite the persistent structural drawbacks.

Through this set of reflective questions, Campos (2016: 86-87) makes the learners realize about the usefulness of "familiar media conventions" in making media content more easily accessible and intelligible to the public. However, he is also deeply concerned about how these orthodox media conventions marginalize and undermine alternative meanings and messages that do not fit the traditional frame and format. Corollary to this is his follow-up question about how the audience are only likely to be

responsive and accommodating to familiar media form and content, thereby crowding out non-mainstream, counter-cultural, and progressive media messages and platforms. Another relevant but challenging question posed by Campos (2016) is inquiring the students about specific media message that they can think of which will be "hard to communicate given only conventional media form". This profound question runs parallel with the main contention of this research which argues that *alternative discourses* are best apprehended, embodied, and enacted by way of *alternative pedagogies*.

> *How do familiar media conventions render media form/content legible and, therefore, capable of addressing media consumers on a level than can easily be understood?* (Campos 2016: 86)

> *Can you think of examples of messages that will be hard to communicate given only conventional media form/content?* (Campos 2016: 87)

Chapter VI

PEDAGOGICAL (COUNTER)IMPERATIVES

"Critical pedagogy becomes a project that stresses the need for teachers and students to actively transform knowledge rather than simply consume it." – Henry Giroux

Textbook Task Types and Styles

Textbook authors vary in their adoption of task types and styles. For instance, Magpile (2016), Liquigan (2016), and Alagaran (2019) use a combination of objective and subjective question types. Liquigan (2016) and Magpile (2016) employ tasks that

heavily require the students to perform specific role assignments though various context-based exercises. Magpile (2016) seeks to ascertain learners' prior knowledge and expectation in every lesson to facilitate the acquisition of new knowledge. Alagaran (2019) aims to maximize student learning in both school and home settings by interposing "MIL Time" with their parents. Zarate (2016), Alagaran (2019), and Liquigan (2016) incorporate community-based media and information literacy seminars as well as multisectoral dialogues and advocacies. Campos (2016), Cantor (2019), and Zarate (2016) mainstream critical media text analyses and case studies in numerous student tasks and learning activities. Cantor (2019), Magpile (2016), Liquigan (2016), and Yuvienco (2017) sought to incorporate a significant number of media production that employ various media types and platforms. Yuvienco (2017), Liquigan (2016), and Campos (2016) tasks also entail the adoption of various supplementary reading and viewing materials to enrich the lessons. Campos (2016) and Zarate (2016) consistently engage the learners with their profound politico-philosophical lines of inquiry. Yuvienco (2017) and Magpile (2016) make use of cross-disciplinary approach in every lesson and unit, respectively. And lastly, Liquigan (2016) conceptualized the formulation of culminating activities and performance tasks according to various tracks of study (i.e., arts, sports, technical-vocational, and academic). Correspondingly, each textbook task types and styles represents a particular or a combination of media education approach(es). And in varying levels, these textbook task types and styles may either foster or hinder the progressive embodiments of pedagogical praxis.

Traditional Assessment Types

Unquestionably, the reliance on traditional assessment type that for the longest time marked the pedagogical practice in the Philippine educational system does not promote divergent and dialectical learning given its preference and focus on *individualized* and *uniformed* responses. Given the educational system's conventionally uncritical attribute, learning then becomes unconducive to insightful debate, divergent inquiry, and emancipatory discourse among the students. In several instances, there are profound themes and subthemes which could have been approached in a deliberative and critical manner but were presented in simple fill-in the black, true or false, and multiple choice types instead. The functionalist and positivist bias still holds sway in the domain of education, and it remains to be observable in many traditional instructional materials across fields of inquiry.

Media Text Analysis

Media text analysis forms as a staple part of the tasks and learning activities in most of the textbook titles under review. The media texts that are instantiated for analysis include television news programs, newspaper frontpages, news story headlines, news photos, commercial advertisements, billboards, public service announcements, infomercials, noontime variety shows, comedy shows, and songs, among others.

In employing media text analysis, Alagaran (2019: 140), for instance, requires the learners to identify the individuals and institutions behind the media texts and this includes apprehending their social milieu as media producers. Conscious of what goes beyond the product selling, Campos (2016: 80) asks about what lifestyles and values are being promoted and privileged in this social practice. In deconstructing media texts,

Alagaran (2019: 146) requires the students to pay careful attention to the elements and dimensions while Zarate (2016: 58 and 93) underscores structure, chronology, and orientation. More specifically, Alagaran (2019: 97) asks how each element contributes to the creation of the advertisement and how an element affects the rendering of the entire advertisement when taken out of the equation. Zarate (2016: 58, 93), on the other hand, focuses on the sequence of the news presentation (i.e., content) and its implicit agenda (i.e., intent) as well as social implications (i.e., impact). Correspondingly, Campos (2016: 76-77) and Zarate (2016: 93) pay particular attention to *news inserts* and *movie subtexts* as well as the *hidden logic* that explains the adoption of these media codes and conventions. This type of exercise also lets the students observe the patterns of inclusion and omission in media outputs, and, more crucially, unmask the underlying motivations of the content creators and financiers. Media text analysis also allows the learners to identify the "consistent patterns or formulas" governing the media content (Liquigan 2016: 55). For instance, cultural anthropologist Michael Tan (2012) observed "crime, cleavage, and celebrities" as formulaic themes in packaging and rendering mainstream and sensationalized news reporting.

> *What does the ad directly and indirectly sell?* (Alagaran 2019: 141)

> *How do the elements contribute to the overall execution of the advertisement? Take out one or two elements from this advertisement and see what happens.*
> (Alagaran 2019: 97)

> *It is suggested that you concentrate first on the structure – how are news items presented in terms of chronology. What makes up the headline news? What makes up the middle section? What news items both precede and follow the advertising breaks?*
> (Zarate 2016: 58)

> *What are the subtexts of the title 'Weapons of Mass Deception'? What are the subtexts*

of the title 'Control Room'? (Campos 2016: 76-77)

What is his/her political affiliation, what media organization he or/she represents? What was covered and not covered? (Alagaran 2019: 140)

The adoption of critical perspective in examining media form and content is valuable in fulfilling the course objective of producing learners who are equipped with analytical and evaluative skills. Critical thinking enables the students to become conscious (*may kamalayan*) and reflective (*mapagnilay*) about the knowledge and information that they acquire in school and through media. Along this line, critical media text analysis allows the discovery of new perspectives about the text (and its context) that may not be readily apparent through plain reading or that may not be achievable by only employing traditional pedagogical approach.

Commendably, an early introduction of the learners to the rudiments of discourse analysis is initiated by Alagaran (2019: 140-142, 146-147, 157-158) through the *creator-content-consumer* model. The set of critical questions involves comparing media products based on the social background of the producer (creator), slant of the media message (content), presence of politically charged labels, adjectives, verbs, signs, and symbols (content), use/non-use of politically correct and gender sensitive language (content), prospective gain of the user (consumer), and emotions that are stirred up by the media exposure (consumer), among others.

Critical Mini-case Studies

Cantor (2019) optimized the use of critical mini-case studies in applying the various

thematic approaches (e.g., gender-based, culture-based, identity-based, genre-based, format-based, etc.) in media and information literacy analysis. The mini-case studies are set in the context of local media controversies, particularly those that centered on gender, human rights, and ethical issues. *Case study method* trains the learners to analyze and evaluate a contentious and complex subject matter and apprehend it in its multidimensionality, i.e., politico-economic, socio-cultural, and ethico-moral. It also provides them with a contextual understanding of the interacting relationships of social forces, factors, and conditions surrounding the issue under scrutiny. At the same time, students get to critically discern the how's and why's of the phenomenon in its specific situated and nuanced context (e.g., materiality, spatiality, temporality). Cantor's (2019) critical mini-case studies include socio-sectoral issues that deal with cultural appropriation (pp. 202-203), body politics (pp. 206-207), "fake news" (pp. 208-209), gender discrimination (pp. 2012-2013, 217), ethical journalism (p. 215), brownface (p. 220), sexualization of minors (pp. 223-224), discrimination based on physical appearance (pp. 225-226), victim-blaming (p. 228), and discrimination based on civil status and type of family structure (pp. 230-231). In terms of media education approach, this diverse set of instantiated socio-sectoral issues as cases and contexts for critical analysis aligns coherently with *critical media literacy*.

Context-based Exercises

In the textbook tasks, one of the strategies employed by the authors to help the learners internalize and apply the course lessons is through context-base exercises. In the textbook tasks, students are instructed to perform diverse social and professional

roles in various contexts. Generally, task instructions in this type of learning activities include the following elements and dimensions: (1) role assignment, (2) stakeholders involved, (3) output or performance required, (4) target audience, (5) situational or institutional context, (6) duration, and (7) available resources. The specific tasks in this exercise normally require the students to contemplate, strategize, and act upon the hypothetical scenario and the surrounding social circumstances instantiated by the textbook authors. This learning strategy also allows the students to engage in dynamic interaction with their co-learners by collaboratively applying the media and information literacy core concepts, competencies, and values as a team. As an interactive learning strategy, the students are presented with an opportunity to (1) perform various social roles, (2) apply the composite set of media and information literacy skills, and (3) enhance their problem-solving capabilities.

However, some student tasks are mainly conceived and formulated from the *functionalist lens*, devoid of the complexities and contradictions that mark the relationships between the social forces in the development community. By *alternatively* adopting what this research refers to as *critical context-based exercises*, learners will be able to make a deeper sense of how the various social and sectoral groups in the society and the standpoints that they represent not only converge but also challenge each other as they compete and struggle for economic resources, political influence, and symbolic power.

The *instantiated roles* by Magpile (2016) in her context-based exercises in the table below are broad and varied with the following general categories: media-oriented, arts-oriented, technology-oriented, academic-oriented, leadership-oriented,

advertising/marketing-oriented, and business-oriented. The *instantiated contexts* likewise vary in terms of sector and setting and can thus be classified into the following general areas: education-based, history-based, business-based, competition-based, public sector-based, and election-based. The *activity objectives* also manifested a diverse set of *instantiated themes* that can be grouped into the following general substantive fields: media-related, education-related, social justice-related, ethics-related, governance-related, election-related, business-related, marketing-related, household-related, and family-related. Lastly, the *given audience* can be categorized according to being family-based, campus-based, and community-based.

Table 6: Magpile's (2016) context-based exercises

Role	Context	Topic/Theme/Goal	Output	Audience
editor-in-chief	student media congress	social media and positive change	editorial	student leaders
visual artists	media exhibit	importance of MIL	poster	high school students
student council president	human rights day	freedom of expression	speech	student council members
web designers	voter's education	voting wisely	web page	voters
historian	documentation of local history	local history	letter of request	local government unit
performers	orientation program	ethical standard in publishing	skit	journalist interns

storyteller	world literacy day	Grimm Brothers or Hans Christian Andersen	storytelling	preschool children
owners of an advertising agency	commissioned by a publishing firm to promote their magazine	boost magazine sales	flyer	parents
biographer	patriarch's centenary birthday	patriarch's accomplishments and contributions	biography	family and closest friends of the patriarch
filmmakers	Cinemalaya	life story of an unsung Filipino hero	film	Cinemalaya audience
motivational speaker	DepEd sponsored talk	responsible use of social media	speech	high school students
scriptwriters	noontime variety show	boost the rating of the show and promote family values	skit	family viewers
painter	backdrop set for a stage play	anti-cyberbullying	mural painting	stage play audience
hip-hop dancers	CBCP media congress	media and information ethics	interpretative dance	media congress audience
food critic	weekly column in a leading magazine	good and bad effects of a famous food product in the market	food review	magazine readers
singing group	Department of Agriculture launching activity	introduce Philippine agricultural products to foreign investors	jingle	foreign investors
inventor	Science fair	solicit funding support from sponsors for an invention aimed at solving a common household chore	brochure	sponsors
video gamers	video game convention	game review to encourage young gamers to patronize the video game	video clip (game review)	convention attendees
newscaster	national elections	role models in the community in terms of public service and leadership	PPT presentation	TV viewers
entrepreneurs	bazaar	promote personalized gift items	web page	customers
blogger	student congress	advancing advocacies	speech	high school students

		(e.g., humanitarian or environmental campaigns)		
owners of startup advertising company	national elections	electoral campaign of a presidential candidate	print ad campaign	voters
features editor	book review of a young adult fiction book	story's message and values	book review	readers
graphic designers	commissioned to create a book design	capture the book's message and story line	book cover design	readers
visual artist	art gallery exhibit	power of visual information	oil pastel painting	gallery visitors
Fine Arts majors	half-day art lesson	application of visual information to express the message of love	art demonstration	elementary pupils
radio anchor	public service program	solicit financial support from listeners through an interview featuring an indigent person	radio interview	radio listeners
mass communication students	nationwide competition	radio drama adaptation of a Filipino *teleserye*	radio drama	audience and jurors of the competition
TV actor	public service informercial	prevention of movie piracy	infomercial	TV viewers
independent filmmakers	movie festival	film about relevant social issue that will move ordinary people into action	documentary film	movie festival audience
treasurer of student council	foundation day	seek the approval of the school board for the budget request	budget presentation through a PPT	members of the school board
student inventors	Science fair	solicit funding support from DOST for an invention aimed at solving a common household chore	Science pitch	Department of Science and Technology panel

Source: Magpile, C. (2016). Media and Information Literacy: Enhancing Education through Effective Communication. Quezon City: The *Intelligente* Publishing.

Meanwhile, Liquigan (2016) for his part demonstrated the same breadth and variety based on the *instantiated roles* that can be categorized as information-oriented, media-

oriented, education-oriented, voluntary sector-oriented, and business-oriented. *Context-wise*, the social rendering can be classified according to being education-based, community-based, public service-based, history-based, sports-based, and business-based. In terms of *instantiated themes*, the groupings were based on being health-related, media-related, culture-related, ethics-related, sports-related, competition-related, and business-related. With reference to the *given audience*, the typology can be categorized into co-learners, supervisors, clients, community, and the broader section of the Philippine society.

Table 7: Liquigan's (2016) context-based exercises

Role	Context	Topic/Theme/Goal	Output	Audience
content writer	online health magazine	factual article about a slimming supplement	article	editor, online readers
student volunteer in an NGO	community-based advocacy	responsible use of social media	lecture outline	teenagers
librarian	local public library	promote local library use	video campaign	HS students
program analyst	TV network	compare the primetime soap opera of your network and that of the rival organization	written report	head of the program monitoring division
radio disk jockey	new radio show	informative and educational format	program plan	teenagers
video reporter	online news portal	story on indigenous media and information source	news feature of an interview with an elder in the community	online viewers

graduate student of Sociology	graduate student enrolled in a course on popular culture	cultural significance of tropes in the reception of media texts	critical paper	teacher as evaluator
advice column writer	niche magazine	plagiarism and research ethics	response letter	letter sender and magazine readers
online English teacher	conversational English teaching	social networking as a communication tool for business	sample conversation for a teaching module	ESL learners (Korean and Japanese)
mobile application developer	business development	new mobile application	business proposal	company
historian	textbook on media history	history of Philippine news media	timeline	senior HS students
multimedia specialist	commissioned by a cable channel	MIL concepts	multimedia presentation	class
trainee	national sporting event	sports promotion to correct misconception about the field	short video presentation	young children
sous chef with background in social media	cruise ship	promotion of featured dishes in the cruise	sample article for a personal blog site	supervisor for vetting
ACLE organizers	alternative classroom learning experience	media and information literacy	seminar-workshop	elementary school students
cause-oriented advocate	application of knowledge and skills in social advocacy communication	any social advocacy	online petition page	target audience to be determined by the students
new business owner	business marketing	business advertising applying the lessons in MIL	teaser, brochure, poster	target audience
volunteer tutor	international humanitarian organization	application of visual media design principles	instructional material (visual)	young children in the urban centers of Africa
audio researcher	sound archive of a production house	special effects for a future film or TV project	sample of a sound collage	boss for vetting
contestant in a metro-wide film competition	metro-wide film competition	social issue	short film	12 years and above

life coach	seminar on tempering media use and dependency	optimal but strategic and ethical use of 'manipulative media'	draft lesson/ discussion	SHS class
senior corporate affairs officer	25th company anniversary	MIL design principles and elements	multimedia presentation	event audience and online viewers
web design professional	online sports magazine	sports promotion	homepage and site map	local sports aficionados
web design professional	academe	online academic journal for research outputs and creative works	homepage and site map	academics and research scholars
web design professional	arts and design field	promotion of creative outputs	homepage and site map	prospective clients
web design professional	technical-vocational field	promotion of services offered	homepage and site map	prospective clients

Source: Liquigan, B. (2016). Media and Information Literacy. Makati City: Diwa Learning Systems, Inc.

Role Assignment and Role Allocation

Context-based exercises involve role assignments that vary in terms of *media form*, *social context*, and *level of challenge*. One of the striking patterns that has been observed in the tasks interposed by Magpile (2016) is the seemingly highbrow qualifiers that define some of the instantiated roles assigned to the students. While the nature of the assigned tasks is for the most part socially relevant and well-meaning, the descriptors run the risk of alienating average students who may not possess or may not be able to relate with the following academic and social attributes:

- *renowned* young visual artist
- *famous* storyteller for children
- *renowned* biographer
- *famous* motivational speaker in YouTube
- *renowned* painter
- *famous* hip-hop dancers

- *famous* singing group
- *known* video gamers
- *famous* blogger
- *notable* features editor
- *well-known* visual artist
- Fine Arts majors who are also *honor students* from a *prestigious* university

In lieu of these qualifiers, the author could have alternatively employed more specific and purposive descriptors such as *nationalist, critical, community-oriented, gender sensitive, ethical, culturally appropriate, civic-oriented, place-conscious, ecologically aware,* and *change-driven* that will render the tasks more responsive and transformative.

In a particular task by the same author, the students were instantiated to perform the role of a biographer to document the life of a "well-known philanthropist" who is also a "respected oldest member of the community". The biography is set to be presented to the "oldest member's distinguished family and closest friends who are rich patrons in the community" on his centenary birthday celebration. From the critical standpoint, the task can be interpreted to possess an elitist orientation.

It was in two instances that Magpile (2016) required the learners to assume the role of being a scientist (*dalub-agham*) and both within the context of a Science fair. In the given exercises, the students were specifically tasked to present and showcase the inventions to acquire financial support. However, both tasks involved requiring the learners to feature/pitch an invention that will "make household chores easier" (Magpile 2016: 120) and "solve a common household chore problem" (Magpile 2016: 229). While household chores are legitimate personal and social concerns (and are, in fact,

relevant gender-related advocacies), the context could have been diversified to include a *community-level problem* that also necessitates a sustainable socio-scientific and socio-technological solution.

It has also been observed that media arts education approach strongly manifests in specific textbook tasks which require the students to assume the roles of graphic designers and visual artists but devoid of accompanying critical contextualization and inquiry. Given this shortcoming, there will only be limited opportunities for students to apply critical media literacy through "ideology critique" and "alternative media production" as propounded by Kellner and Share (2007).

Discernably, a recurring pattern that emerged in the role assignments is the social practice of requiring the students to perform the functions of marketing practitioner, advertising specialist, content creator, web designer, and visual artist which are customarily situated within the business context. From the *Parsonian functionalist lens*, formal education serves the *socializing* and *agentive function of "sifting and sorting"* students according to the roles and responsibilities that they will perform later in their adult and professional lives. Curricular-wise and within the context of the Philippine education system, this is implemented through various mechanisms such as the categorization of learners according to *tracks* (e.g., academic, technical-vocational, etc.) and *strands* of study (e.g., Humanities and Social Sciences; Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics; Accountancy, Business and Management; General Academic). Within the parameter of this current study, 'identity construction' is potentially accomplished and facilitated through the role instantiation and role allocation being performed and enacted in the textbook tasks. However, the idea of

mainstreamed role allocation through tradition role instantiation is being critiqued by social activists and critical scholars for its tendency to promote and engender specific lines of work along the dominant economic framework and regime (i.e., neoliberal ideology and capitalist system).

Meanwhile, with respect to role assignments which are situated in the *non-commercial realm* (i.e., public), it has been observed that the rendering and depiction do not commonly involve the necessary elements and sufficient degree of *complexities* and *contradictions* that characterize the Philippine local realities, except for the instantiated social issues surrounding cyberbullying, unhealthy food, plagiarism, and media abuse. Given the various themes and activities interposed by Magpile (2016), the following social and sectoral issues could have also been additionally/alternatively foregrounded as cases and contexts in order to reflect the complex development realities in the country: disinformation, media repression, electoral fraud, historical distortion, textbook errors, political dynasties, cyber-attack, unholy alliance among elite food interest groups, export-oriented economy, innovation and invention gap, racial prejudice in video games, leadership crisis, cut-throat competition, “green fatigue”, poverty pornography, intergenerational poverty, and knowledge divide, among others. In the case of Liquigan’s (2016) set of exercises, he could have also additionally/alternatively incorporated the following social and sectoral issues: false health claims, false advertisings, library closures, decadent popular culture, ethnocide, and predatory journals, among others.

It can also be observed that humanitarian, voluntary as well as public sector roles and contexts are generally limited. For instance, in some textbook tasks the condition

of poverty and underdevelopment is rendered only as a *backdrop* and hence appearing to be already accepted as *natural* and *normal*. This outlook that perceives the reality of poverty as a 'societal given' only brings about proposed interventions and initiatives that merely placate and pacify the people, and hence do not contribute to the problem's critical unraveling and successful eradication.

In the existing lineup, an encouraging learning activity is the task instantiated by Magpile (2016: 105) that requires the student to perform the role of being a food critic. The task in question assigns the learners to review a "famous food product in the market" in order to inform the public of its "good and bad effects". Potentially, this task can also be further enhanced by adopting the approach of journalist and media scholar Michael Pollan (2008) in educating the consumers and policymakers about the health, ecological, and social impacts of heavily processed commercial food products through his critical analyses and commentaries. Critical of their connivance in rendering people's eating habits unhealthy and unsustainable, Pollan (2008) exposes and opposes the unholy alliance of mainstream food marketers, food scientists, and food regulatory agencies by revealing how they (1) resorted to manipulative advertising, (2) lent their credence to hegemonic nutrition ideologies, and (3) abandoned their mandate to protect the public interest, respectively.

Hybridity in Role Instantiations

According to Janks (1997), hybridity is a productive and dynamic aspect of discursive analysis because it is within this social configuration that "different interests are played out". She added that "of the many different discourses available in the

society to be drawn from, different texts privilege different ones". In the specific case of the assigned context-based exercises, the students are socially and communicatively positioned in various roles that are instantiated in a wide range of social settings. For instance, in Magpile's set of tasks (2016), the cases and contexts include student media congress, human rights day, voter's education, noontime variety show, elite biography, food review, agricultural product promotion, science fair, video game review, and art demonstration, among others. Correspondingly, this variety of contexts also instantiated different and sometimes even clashing sectoral agenda and discursive objectives, e.g., elite biography writing vs. documentary filming of ordinary folk, consistent with Janks' (1997) contention about hybridity's propensity to incorporate diverging interests. Within these tasks' respective contexts, two contending orientations emerged, i.e., supposed role model from the social elite vis-a-vis the alternative representation of a paragon from the basic sector.

It can be argued, therefore, that in consideration of the entire set of exercises and based on the foregoing examination, the categories of textbook tasks that emerged include *traditional* and *non-traditional social roles* in the context of *mainstream* and *non-mainstream social settings*.

Social and Sociological Analysis

Media scholar David Buckingham (2020: 71) maintains that media education must involve the contextual analysis of "more sociological dimensions of institutions and audiences". He noted that this may include "more active approaches" that cover "first-hand researches, including interviews or surveys, web-based researches involving case

studies, and simulations of the production of specific media campaigns". This strongly points to the need to direct the learning process along the *sociological path*, i.e., with emphasis being accorded to the critical understanding of socialization, social interaction, social inequality, social movement, collective behavior, and social change and how these concepts and constructs relate to media, information, and communication. Buckingham believes that such *analytical* and *dimensional* focus necessitates a strong research orientation and, correspondingly, those above-enumerated data collection strategies and learning approaches that he recommends require active social engagement with the collaborators from the community.
With particular reference to the textbook tasks, these refer to the instantiated (1) key informant interviews with the elderlies in the community (Alagaran 2019, Yuvienco 2017, Liquigan 2016), (2) mini-surveys of students' media lifestyle and habit (Alagaran 2019, Cantor 2019), and (3) case studies employing various media platforms (Cantor 2019).

In tackling social and sectoral issues through community fora or community dialogues, it is nearly impossible in *sociological terms* not to touch on any development issue pertaining to social inequality and social change considering the encompassing nature of sociology as a field of inquiry and the complexities of the political and policy issues in the locality.

Pedagogical Counter-imperatives

In this particular research inquiry, *pedagogical imperatives* pertain to the teaching methods or practices that have been traditionally imposed upon media education

stakeholders and that have contentiously guided the process of conventional teaching and learning. *Pedagogical counter-imperatives*, on the other hand, refer to the progressive conceptions of how teaching and learning should *alternatively* proceed and be carried out, taking stock of the need to challenge the hegemonies and orthodoxies in media education as a social practice.

Through the critical pedagogical assessment of the corpus of collated instructional materials, the researcher also sought to generate new and alternative insights and perspectives in *reimagining* and *redesigning* media education textbook tasks that will deviate from the prevailing pedagogical conventions. Corollary to this, it is also the objective of this critical inquiry to complement and reinforce the encouraging potential of the seven instructional materials as *counter-discursive* and *counter-pedagogical precursors* in advancing and mainstreaming alternative pedagogical paradigms and practices in media literacy education.

In the process of discursive analysis, the following mutually inclusive and reinforcing critical pedagogies emerged: (1) *critical self-reflectivity,* (2) *critical potentiality,* (3) *critical creativity,* (4) *critical history,* (5) *critical interdisciplinarity,* (6) *critical emotion,* (7) *critical contextualization,* and (8) *critical solidarity.*

Figure 4: Pedagogical counter-imperatives

Pedagogy of Critical Self-reflectivity

As a crucial component of critical media literacy, the learners need to develop the skill of *critical self-reflectivity*. An application of this crucial first stage in *critical praxis* (McLaren & Crawford 2010) is assessing whether the students consider themselves as *active* or *passive* media consumers. Active media consumption pertains to the critical, purposive, and discerning kind with the principal goal of acquiring and applying relevant and useful set of information, contrary to the unproductive, indiscriminate, and passive

type of media use.

From the critical standpoint, self-reflexivity also allows the students to examine their own ideological position in relation to other education and community stakeholders. As interposed by Zarate (2016: 125), a concrete application of this self-awareness is knowing how the learners *make sense* and *make meaning* of the politically charged word "radical" and then comparing this with the appreciation and interpretation of their *co-learners*. Achieving critical self-reflectivity also enables the students to contemplate about the *values* and *voices* that they privilege (or subdue) and, according to Campos (2016: 82), this is a very important point of reflection when producing their own media content.

> *How do you see the word radical in your evaluation? Is what is radical to you the same for your co-learners?* (Zarate 2016: 125)

> *What values am I promoting? Whose voices am I amplifying, and whose voices am I muting?* (Campos 2016: 82)

Etymologically speaking, the term "radical" came from the Latin word "radix" which means "roots". Radical thinking, therefore, necessitates exploring the phenomenon or the problem under scrutiny at the very root. Invoking media scholar Chris Atton (2001), Zarate (2016: 125) asked the students to interpret and evaluate his contention that alternative media must possess "radical content – political or cultural" as well as "strong aesthetic form". Along this line, pursuing the radical path is conceived as a sharp departure from the convention in terms of both content and form and a profound transformation at the very core. This pronouncement of Atton (2001 as cited in Zarate 2016) runs parallel with what critical social scientist Roland Simbulan

(2018: 226) forwarded that social activism must not only proceed "serving the people with commitment" (i.e., "radical content") but also with "style and sophistication" (i.e., strong aesthetic form"), underscoring the mutuality and complementarity of *content* and *form.* Both assertions of Atton (2001) and Simbulan (2018) become practicable when adopted and applied in *critical media literacy*, considering this media education approach's mutually reinforcing attributes of vigilance, creativity, competency, criticality, and integration (Kellner & Share 2007).

Critical self-reflexivity does not only foster self-mastery among the learners because, correspondingly, it also develops them into becoming ethical and empathic individuals in their social interaction with other groups, especially the vulnerable and voiceless. Aside from providing the students with training in technological and technical competencies, textbook tasks and learning activities also need to teach them social skills and moral values that are essential in fulfilling the socio-civic mission of media education literacy such as this set of self-reflective questions below.

> *Was I ethical in the way I conducted the interview, or did I step over some boundaries?* (Cantor 2019: 269)

> *Was I ethical in the way I conducted myself in front of my fellow crew members?* (Cantor 2019: 285)

Relatedly, the prospective set of answers to the question below regarding the learners' topics of preference can already communicate and establish a wealth of information about how to make the teaching-learning praxis of media and information literacy more grounded and responsive to the students' aspirations and agenda.

In practice, this deep-seated interest of the students about something can be an effective jumping-off point to critical learning and thoroughgoing inquiry.

> *What subject matter are you interested in, for which you will gladly devote a lot of time learning? Try to list them down.* (Campos 2016: 158)

> *In what way can your focused interest in something encourage the pursuit of investigation and consequently the gaining of long-lasting knowledge?* (Campos 2016: 159)

For instance, if the MIL students in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) strand happen to be interested in the politics of seed science and sustainable seeds, then, as a follow through, the classroom teacher can recommend related and relevant advocacies such as community seed banks, local seed exchanges, indigenous seed practices, and seed freedom movements to enrich the learning experience and, correspondingly, apply the set of media and information competencies in the advocacy praxis.

Being socially aware of the direct and indirect implications of the media content that one creates toward other individuals and groups is a hallmark of maturity and is, in fact, a laudable attitude in the social practice of "border crossing" and solidarity building (Giroux 1991 as cited in Kuecker 2009). In relation to participatory media production and at the core of the reflective question below by Campos (2016: 105) is the social construct of "border pedagogy".

> *How will our media message affect the way we see others and ourselves or the way others will see us and themselves?* (Campos 2016: 105)

> *What media message am I constructing/sharing/liking?* (Campos 2016: 82)

Campos (2016) maintains that media literacy allows individuals and institutions to question their motivation behind every media content that they create and disseminate. For instance, with reference to intensely contested social issues such as election-related disinformation and COVID-19-related vaccine hesitancy, the following reflective questions raised by Campos (2016) serve as effective guideposts in making the students become discerning in their communication-related decisions and actions, to wit:

> *What is the purpose of my message?* (Campos 2016: 82)
>
> *What values am I promoting? Whose voices am I amplifying, and whose voice am I muting?* (Campos 2016: 82)
>
> *Have I given the construction and dissemination of this message judicious and careful thought?* (Campos 2016: 82)
>
> *Will I hold myself responsible and accountable for the media message that I am constructing and the values I am promoting/censuring?* (Campos 2016: 82)

The questions above also promote the culture of media ethics and accountability among the students by enabling them to become conscious of the values and voices that they privilege (or mute) in the communicative acts of producing and disseminating media. Ultimately, critical self-reflexivity must lead to *self-development* and the loftier goal of *societal development*.

A commendable self-reflective task in the initial chapter of Liquigan's instructional material (2016: 14) is requiring the students to identify the specific "stage in the typology of media literacy" which they think they have attained thus far. These stages include "acquiring fundamentals, language acquisition, narrative acquisition, developing

skepticism, intensive development, experiential exploring, critical appreciation, and social responsibility" (Potter 2011 as cited in Liquigan 2016). In varying degrees, each of the typology's constitutive stage contributes to the goal of achieving civic intentionality and critical place-based inquiry. For instance, as early as the stage of "acquiring fundamentals", the students are already introduced to the standpoint that "there are human beings and other physical things apart from oneself". This fundamental precept is crucial in "reading the world" in both its physical and social dimensions. In "experiential exploring", students develop the skill of "seeking out different forms of narratives", which is crucial in telling stories from different vantage points (Potter 2011 as cited in Liquigan 2016). The subsequent stage of imbibing "critical appreciation" affords the learners to apprehend the intersecting "historical, economic, political, and artistic contexts of message systems" (Potter 2011 as cited in Liquigan 2016), which is vital in understanding the multidimensionality and intricacy of the communication phenomenon. In the last stage of developing "social responsibility", students are expected to possess the moral foundation of being conscious and accountable to their own decisions and actions, thereby running consistent with the self-reflective pedagogy of being self-aware while also being other-oriented.

In the initial chapters of most textbooks, tasks normally begin with activities that ascertain the learners' *media knowledge* (cognitive), *media attitude* (affective), and *media experience* (psychomotor). This pedagogical approach is crucial in identifying and mapping the students' level of media exposure and understanding and, according to media scholar David Buckingham (2019), this media education practice is proven to be "engaging and effective". He also added that making students "document, analyze

and reflect" about their media lifestyle and habit is a crucial first step in critical media education praxis. In this sense, the pedagogical initiative of identifying *prior knowledge* is necessary in determining and assessing the students' *tacit* and *situated knowledge,* which is foundational in their contextualized education.

> *What do I already know? What do I want to know?* (Magpile 2016)

> *Assuming that you are awake for 16 hours, for how many hours daily do you use the following media and technologies: television, radio, newspaper…?* (Alagaran 2019: 15)

> *Do you consider yourself e-literate? When is an information objective/subjective?* (Liquigan 2016: 35)

> *Review your profile and post online (e.g., Facebook or Twitter). Does it reflect good online behavior?* (Yuvienco 2017: 74)

A very profound socio-philosophical question based on Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451 that Campos (2016) forwarded is if a learner is to be part of a "wilderness community that memorizes, embodies, and mediates books", then what particular book would he/she choose to represent. The novel is situated in a distant future where books are outlawed and burned, whereby memorizing books and imbibing their messages are the only means possible to memorialize their legacies and, correspondingly, revive knowledge and rebuild society. This well-thought-out textbook task enables the students to inquire deeply into their philosophy and aspiration based on their social circumstances and as reflected by their prospective book choice.

> *If you were part of the wilderness community that memorizes, embodies, and mediates books, which book would you like to be?* (Campos 2016: 11)

Pedagogy of Critical Potentiality

In relation to both pedagogies of critical self-reflectivity and critical potentiality, the lineup of introspective questions below benefits the students by allowing them to reflect about their individual interests and learning styles as well as come to terms with their personal constraints – which are all-important considerations in becoming *reflective scholars* and *practitioners*. The self-reflective questions will also enable the learners to (1) develop their self-mastery, (2) apprehend the underlying basis and interconnection of their multi-faceted interests, and (3) internalize how these personal inclinations can bring about new possibilities in terms of academic life, professional career, and volunteer work. Within this context, critical self-awareness is conceived to bring about immense *possibilities* and *potentialities* to individuals and institutions. Along this line, what was initially perceived to be a mere personal interest can eventually proceed and advance into becoming a life-long profession and/or advocacy.

> *In which learning directions can your interest lead you, beyond your usual comfort zone? Can your interest in games lead you into studying military history? Can your interest in food lead you into studying a foreign culture? Can your interest in horror stories lead you into anthropology?* (Campos 2016: 158)

> *Do you see connections in your varied interests that can lead to new interests? For instance, can your interest in music and movies lead you to sophisticated appreciation of film editing? Can your interest in visual design and poetry lead you into architecture? Can your interest in certain television series lead you into law and ethics?*
> (Campos 2016: 158-159)

By starting with this above-quoted set of queries about student interests, the textbook authors can then proceed asking them about how MIL knowledge, skills and values can be effectively employed to promote and mainstream the generally undersubscribed but critical, empowering, and transformative counterparts of the foregoing fields of interest such as critical history, critical cross-cultural studies, critical

anthropology, critical cinema/third cinema, critical architecture, alternative/developmental lawyering, and critical information ethics, among others. Correspondingly, this critical application is a crucial first step in achieving loftier societal goals and aspirations (e.g., countering historical distortion, promoting sustainable food systems, ending cultural prejudice, engendering a liberating film culture, advocating sustainable architecture, practicing public interest lawyering, and tackling information pathologies).

Pedagogy of Critical Creativity

As a subject area, media and information literacy is strongly associated with the act of production that is characterized by *imaginativeness* and *inventiveness* or, in essence, *creativity*. As such, it is quite common that media and information literacy is generally approached by some textbook authors and classroom teachers along the line of *media arts education* paradigm. In fact, it was revealed by MIL advocate Marlon Julian Nombrado (2021) that some teachers even require their students to memorize font types and animation styles in their classes and, according to him, such practice is *not* media and information literacy by any measure. The pedagogical challenge, therefore, is to elevate the discourse by imbibing and applying "ideology critique", "politics of representation", and "alternative media production" (Keller & Share 2007: 4-5).

A task requiring the students to develop a sequel of a particular work (i.e., book, film, or TV show) such as the one formulated by Cantor (2019) provides them with an excellent opportunity to enhance their information literacy and creative presentation.

The learning activity specifically involves the task of developing a research plan to identify, locate, and study the required set of information for the assigned creative work.

> *Choose a specific book, TV, show or film to focus on your research. A sequel is the next piece of content following an original piece. For a book or a film, you will write the second in the series. For the TV show, you will write the second episode. What you need to write is merely an outline of what you plan to include in the sequel. Make an outline of the information you need to look for, study, and include. Your output should be a detailed outline of your research plan.* (Cantor 2019: 181)

As a modification of the task, the learners may also consider producing a *countercultural* version with an alternative and liberating twist. Consistent with the progressive tradition of *social realism* and *communication activism*, the sequel can be re-imagined as a critical counterpart of the original version. Within this context, creativity must be conceived as *purposive, productive*, and even *transgressive*, and not to be merely perceived as a design element or artistic rendering. Fusing criticality and creativity, McCormack and Titchen (2006) conceive "critical creativity" as the integration of "critical social science" with "the creative and ancient traditions and the natural world" (i.e., *likha at likas*) for the consummate end-goal of "human flourishing" (*translation mine*). Employing the *popular in form and social in content* discursive strategy, Storm and Magneto of the famous superhero animation and film series, for instance, can be *re-imagined* and *re-presented* as climate justice and national industrialization advocates, respectively, in the sequel of the (re)conceptualized task. Consistent with the *likha at likas* approach, this creative production can even be applied in a more critical, situated, and culturally-rooted rendering by re-imagining and re-presenting local myths and legends (e.g., *Maria Makiling* and *Maria Sinukuan*) along the themes and sub-themes involving the people's legitimate struggles against land-grabbing, mega-

dam construction, transnational mining, mass tourism, sand quarrying, and other forms of development aggression.

A question that adopts a popular topic and incorporates social and sociological analysis is this one by Campos (2016: 8) asking the students why ghost stories typically involve “search for justice”. This perceptive question is very helpful in revealing what the researcher believes to be the dysfunctional character of the country’s criminal justice system (i.e., law enforcement, prosecution, court, penology, and community) such that in the creative storylines ghosts are typically depicted and rendered as instrumental in resolving criminal investigation and in seeking/dispensing justice.

> *Why are ghost stories which feature mediums as characters typically about the search for justice?* (Campos 2016: 7)

> *How is the genre of horror a suitable vehicle for a story about injustice?* (Campos 2016: 92)

Pedagogy of Critical History

The critical apprehension of the present and the critical anticipation of the future rest on the *critical discernment of the past*. Within this context, the critical understanding of contemporary development issues will only be possible by invoking critical history and learning from its valuable lessons. The first entry in the textbook tasks below requires the students to develop a timeline of technological evolution based on available historical sources and with the second entry instructing the learners to conduct an in-depth interview about media and democracy. The last entry asks the learners to critically compare the past and the present media landscapes to determine if any qualitative change ever materialized and developed over time.

> *As you read the chapter, do your own research, and create your own timeline of major technology inventions and innovations. Begin with the printing press and end with Web 2.0.* (Campos 2016: 25)
>
> *You are a historian. You are tasked to write a timeline of the history of Philippine news media which will be included in a textbook on media history. The timeline should be able to include all media forms where news is delivered or presented.* (Liquigan 2016: 114)
>
> *Interview a history teacher in your school about instances in Philippine history where media had a major role in the preservation of democracy and democratic processes in the Philippines.* (Liquigan 2016: 27)
>
> *If you have access to PCIJ's assessments of 1990s and 2000s Philippine media, compare if their findings and observations are still true today.* (Campos 2016: 69)

Aside from the default elements, i.e., the people (*who*), place (*where*), and time (*when*), it can be argued that the timeline also needs to include the contradictions and struggles in the history of mass media. As such, the equally important elements of *narrative* and *interpretation* (or the *why's* and *how's*) must likewise be incorporated as critical dimensions of the socio-historical inquiry. Corollary to this, the proposed timeline by the students therefore must not only center on technological changes but should also cover the accompanying and underlying socio-political and socio-cultural *shifts* and *continuities*. Within the context of the Global South's media history, for instance, the alternative timeline must therefore cover and foreground the following complex and contentious issues that defined and shaped it, i.e., colonial media, media repression, media censorship, media monopoly, media decadence, and media corruption, among others.

Socio-historical consciousness is a vital element in critical media education. It affords the learners to understand how systems and institutions came into existence and how they went through the process of complex and dialectical change. Complementarily,

critical media and information literacies have key roles to play in upholding historical truth and in defending it from being distorted, manipulated, and weaponized by the power wielders. Through the reflective question below, for instance, Campos (2016: 27) seeks to make the students perceptively realize that distorting history is "a means of controlling the present and the future", and hence the nation's *being* and *becoming*.

> *In the novel, it was important for the state leader, Big Brother, and his ruling party to control the past—that is to (re)write the history that people will believe in. In what way is the manipulation of history a means of controlling the present and the future?*
> (Campos 2016: 27)

Pedagogy of Critical Interdisciplinarity

One of the key attributes of holistic inquiry is *cross-curricular learning*, i.e., "cross-connecting" (Yuvienco 2017) with other subject areas aimed at fostering the complementarity, correspondence, and interconnectedness of knowledge. This education framework is anchored on the fundamental premise that holistic learning must be *integrative* and *transcending*.

As a pedagogical device, media and information literacy serves as an effective and viable platform to apply interdisciplinarity within the existing Philippine K-12 Senior High School curriculum. This can be attributed to the already cross-disciplinary character of the subject area. Through the adoption of interdisciplinarity in the conceptualization of textbook tasks, media and information literacy education will be able to maximize the vast potential of engaging different individuals, institutions, and professional groups in the learning process. Strategically, Yuvienco (2017) employed critical interdisciplinarity in enhancing and enriching the theoretical and practical knowledge learned by the students from other fields of inquiry by intertwining them with the know-what and know-

how drawn from media and information literacy. The substantive areas encompass the *human sciences* and the *humanities* as well as the *theoretical* and the *applied* fields. This learning strategy involves the conscious and sustained effort in making knowledge, skills, and values acquisition coherent, complementary, and synergistic. As such, this can be considered as a sharp departure from the orthodox learning culture characterized by *counterproductive turfing* and *compartmentalization* which are all-too-common in the academic realm.

As an area of study, media and information literacy is essentially interdisciplinary in orientation; however, Bautista (2021) revealed in his research how the subject is being typecast by some education stakeholders as a field exclusive only to teachers with background in Information Technology (IT) and Communication. Consequently, this has serious implications to the academic load assignment of teachers and their corresponding lesson planning and execution. Conscious of MIL's interdisciplinary attribute, Yuvienco (2017) initiated a good number of cross-disciplinary engagement with other subject areas through his prescribed textbook tasks. For instance, in cross-connecting with Personality Development, Yuvienco (2017) posed a question for the students to reflect on the personal and social circumstances of an individual who is predisposed to sharing "fake news" and how to deal with it if one is in the same predicament. It is also commendable when media and information literacy is complementarily employed in tandem with another socially relevant subject area to fulfill both fields' socio-civic mission. For instance, in another task below, media and information literacy was cross-connected with disaster readiness and risk reduction (DRRR) in requiring the learners (1) to explore the content of the existing DRRR

curriculum and (2) to put up an online group featuring pertinent DRRR-related data and information for the promotion of disaster awareness, preparedness, and mitigation in the local community.

> MIL x Personality Development
> *Ano sa tingin mo ang sitwasyon kung saan ang isang tao ay magbabahagi ng fake news sa Internet? Bakit? Kung ikaw ang nasa ganoong sitwasyon, ano ang maari mong naiisip o nararamdaman?* (Yuvienco 2017: 36)

> MIL x DRRM
> *Look for the K-12 curriculum guide of disaster readiness and risk reduction…With your group mates, explore the contents of the curriculum and put together for your locality a series of information texts that can be available online. You can create an FB group for this activity.* (Yuvienco 2017: 100)

Consistent with the discourse of suspicion, critical interdisciplinarity interrogates the "very structure of knowledge to critique the way that education and research are carved up into silos", thereby allowing the learners to apprehend and challenge "how structures confine and control meaning" and, by extension, also define and restrict their *sense-making* and *meaning-making* experiences (Rebus Community n.d., De Rosa 2022).

The map below features the subject areas that Yuvienco (2017) instantiates to be cross-connected with media and information literacy. The fields of inquiry range from oral communication to statistics and probability. Meanwhile, Magpile (2016) for her part also attempted to cross-connecting media and information literacy with science, math, music, arts, literature, advertising, and business but the effort tended to lean more on providing academic, business, and leisure advice to students by recommending useful online applications and media resources.

Figure 5: Yuvienco's (2017) cross-disciplinary tasks and learning activities

Pedagogy of Critical Emotion

Recognizing the *socio-emotional* dimension of dealing with media and information is crucial in the holistic and reflective media literacy education. This pedagogical outlook

involves the familiarization with a wide range of *positive* and *negative emotions*. However, there is also a need to problematize this diversity and complexity of emotions by making sense of their broader social dimensions and tracing their structural bases, contrary to the default mode of merely apprehending them in the personal and psycho-behavioral level. From the critical perspective, for instance, Facebook use and the associated emotions of envy and depression can be attributed to macro-structural realities such as the prevailing economic and cultural systems and the dysfunctions and disorders that they bring about and perpetuate. In the context of Alagaran's (2019) well-framed task, it can be inferred that the question reflects the study of Tandoc et al. (2015) in that it pointed out how envy predicts and mediates depression in relation to Facebook exposure, thereby providing a sound basis to problematize human emotion in the context of social media use.

Within the context of the range of emotions identified in the textbook tasks below, it is necessary to apprehend positive emotions such as *hope* as a transformative force (and not in its passive sense) and *care* as an act of active engagement and relatedness as well as a call for justice (and not as a sign of weakness and meekness). In the same vein, the range of negative emotions also needs to be problematized to understand how they can be even more disempowering or emasculating when not put into proper perspective and if the main sources of provocation (i.e., superordinate factors) are not dealt with and acted upon.

Factoring emotion in the process of "border crossing" fosters solidarity with other groups, especially the most vulnerable ones given the deep-seated anxieties and fears that they collectively bear. For instance, this is embodied in the act of sympathizing and

forging solidarity with the Martial Law victims as commendably instantiated by Magpile (2016) in her textbook task. Within the parameter of the critical tradition, emotion being "contextual, relational, and shifting" must be conceived as "deeply enmeshed in power relations" and that in relation to *reason* the two "are intertwined in all decision-making processes" and, essentially, this includes active position-taking as well as interest articulation on pressing social and sectoral issues (Head & Tafakori, n.d.).

Within the context of the textbook tasks below, it can be inferred how emotions as discussed above play a central or mediating role in human relations, media messages, and even in advocacy work.

> *Choose two Facebook posts: one from a close friend who you also get to see almost every day and one from a friend who you met only online. Compare the posts. Are you envious? Did you feel depressed?* (Alagaran 2019: 158)

> *Does the public service announcement build on positive emotions, like hope and care?* (Campos 2016: 99)

> *Does the public service announcement build on negative emotions, like fear and anger?* (Campos 2016: 99)

> *How did you feel after reading the experiences of the people who were tortured during Martial Law?* (Magpile 2016: 72)

Pedagogy of Critical Contextualization

In view of the increasing globalization trend, media educators need to develop the learners' analytical skills in making critical sense of the commonalities and differences of the social phenomena in the international context vis-à-vis their respective local settings and frames of reference, and vice versa. Yuvienco (2017), for instance,

presented that “television and newspapers are the largest factors driving crime perceptions in the UK”. Based on this factual claim, he then asked the students if the pattern is different in their particular local contexts. This rendering of critical contextualization allows the learners to apply the skill of perceptive comparison within the political climate of an interconnected (but also highly polarized and stratified) social world. However, apart from mapping the similarities and distinctions between the global and local contexts, students must also be trained to identify and apprehend the *complex nexus* between the two.

A meaningful and interesting social practice in the creative industry is the communicative act of dubbing foreign television programs in Filipino. In a task by Zarate (2016: 53), she sought to problematize this by asking the students about “certain nuances that Filipino-produced telenovelas might not have” as well as the “elements in the Philippine telenovelas that are absent in Koreanovela”. The same goes with the need to analyze franchised global television formats (e.g., Big Brother) and the manner whereby the “local Filipino elements are foregrounded” (Zarate 2016: 57). In such socio-cultural encounters where *translation* (in the case of dubbing) and *glocalization* (in the case of franchising) are involved, it is important that both social practices (i.e., translation and glocalization) are understood as shaped and influenced also by the prevailing and interacting power configurations in the global and local terrains.

> *A Koreanovela might have certain nuances that Filipino-produced telenovelas might not have. Or is it possible that there are elements in the Philippine telenovela that are absent in Koreanovela?* (Zarate 2016: 53)

> *Try to seek out by closely watching these global programs (e.g., Big Brother) as adopted by local television the local (i.e., Filipino) elements that are foregrounded.* (Zarate 2016: 57)

Based on the foregoing analysis, academic authors therefore must refrain from conceptualizing textbook tasks that only employ homogenous, one-size-fits-all, and contextless approach. This traditional format foregoes the opportunity of providing the students with a locally situated and culturally diverse learning experience. Tasks that are haphazardly constructed and totally devoid of social context are problematic since they do not encourage situated, grounded, and culturally rooted analysis. The particularities of the classroom, the campus, the family, the community, and the broader international setting are important considerations in conceptualizing and developing textbook tasks and learning assessments. Within this context, the textbook authors need to understand the different types and structures of these social institutions across societies and cultures. For instance, considering the varying levels of exposure of students to rural political economy, Campos (2016) advises them to conduct a preliminary reading about the concerned sector and setting of the instantiated case studies as part of their contextualized learning, to wit:

> *To enhance your appreciation of the film, do some background reading on the Mangyan of Mindoro, in general, and the Irayas, in particular*
> (Campos 2016: 107)

> *To deepen your connection with the subjects in the film, read up on the cultures and economics of the people in Leyte and Samar, especially after Typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan).* (Campos 2016: 111)

> *Read up on who the Lumad are. What is their particular situation as people of Mindanao, being non-Muslims and non-Christians? Research also on how they are being displaced by land-grabbing, illegal mining, and the militarization of their home places.*
> (Campos 2016: 115)

Pedagogy of Critical Solidarity

An economic system that promotes cut-throat competition and that "rejects as weakness any measure of compassion, care, and trust" can never align and correspond with the praxis of community solidarity and public sphere pedagogy. These competitive and predatory attributes of the market model become even more pernicious and worrisome when extended and normalized in other realms of human affairs such as media and education.

In the Philippine context, the ethics of care pertains to "*pagkalinga*" (care) and is related to "*malasakit*" (concern) and "*pakikipagkapwa*" (shared identity). In connection with the local *kapwa* culture, the associated constructs of "receptivity and relatedness" articulated by Mihailidis (2019) can only be expressed and embodied in MIL education through civic-intentioned and community-oriented pedagogies and practices. Along this line, a laudable practice of *border pedagogy* (Giroux 1991 as cited in Kuecker 2009) and *critical solidarity* (Kellner & Share 2007) is Magpile's (2016: 72) letter writing task to the "surviving family of those who had a family member who had gone missing or have been found dead for being an activist during the time of Martial Law". Part of the initial stage of border crossing is requiring the students to read a Rappler article titled "Never Again: Martial Law Stories Young People Need to Hear". This pedagogical praxis will help the learners understand the struggle of social activists' during that perilous historical period and its surrounding socio-political realities. Students are specifically instructed to state in the letter their committed support to the socio-political cause of "seeking justice and fighting for human rights". The task exemplifies a strong self-reflective and action-oriented attribute quite similar with the *human rights praxis* being

commendably interposed by Campos (2016) against the culture of impunity in media killings.

> *How did you feel after reading the experiences of the people who were tortured during Martial Law?* (Magpile 2016: 72)

> *What can ordinary citizens like you do to show their support to the victims of human rights violation during Martial Law?* (Magpile 2016: 72)

> *From the same websites, study the patterns of violence. Why are journalists being killed in other places? Are these killings comparable to what happens in the Philippines? What should you do about this new information that you have learned?*
> (Campos 2016: 187)

Moreover, the adoption of the phrase "ordinary citizens" by Magpile (see passage above) renders it more appropriate, relatable, and empathic given the task's objective of expressing care, seeking justice, and forging solidarity.

Consistent with the strong communication-oriented and value-based character of media and information literacy, textbook tasks therefore need to be promotive of *interactivity*, *feedback*, and *collaboration*. Fundamentally, collaborative learning techniques allow the students to (1) enhance interpersonal communication, (2) engender solidarity and accountability, and (3) promote dialogic and divergent inquiry in acquiring as well as generating new knowledge. Discernably, these attributes and affordances of critical solidarity are manifested in the textbook tasks that require learners to (1) "collaborate with classmates" in processing information and consolidating outputs (Yuvienco 2017: 12), (2) "deal with leaders and administrative heads" in organizing media projects (Zarate 2016: 36), and (3) "ask permission from the community leaders" for informed consent when conducting research work (Cantor 2019:

258), among others.

In the context of an ever-worsening resource deprivation and ever-widening resource divide, there is an even greater need for media literacy education to promote and practice the culture of "agency, care, critical consciousness, persistence, and emancipation" among its learners (Mihailidis 2018: 9-11). An all-encompassing embodiment of these constructs is the context-based exercise conceptualized by Liquigan (2016: 163) assigning the student to assume the role of a "volunteer tutor for an international humanitarian organization…to teach basic literacy skills to young children in urban centers" in Africa. The task instantiates the following contexts which the learners must be able to factor in and deal with in developing the required instructional materials, i.e., (1) reality of widespread poverty, underdevelopment, and social exclusion in the African continent, (2) educational poverty among the vulnerable youth, (3) digital divide as a manifestation of social stratification, and (4) language barrier. This activity also introduces the students to the elements and constructs of critical place-based inquiry through the instantiation of institutionalized power differences and localized pattern of poverty as social backdrop. This is a commendable task that applies critical media pedagogy in covering social and sectoral issues under a topic (i.e., visual media) which would have just been conventionally approached in a technical and/or aesthetic dimension by conventional textbook authors. While the activity is intended only as a simulation exercise of sort, it can also be modified and adopted as a performance task that will involve actual local community integration.

> *You are a volunteer tutor/educator for an international humanitarian organization and you are assigned to teach basic literacy skills to young children in urban center in some*

> *countries in Africa. You must utilize your knowledge about visual information and media to come up with instructional materials for this purpose.* (Liquigan 2016: 163)

Ethical consideration is an important dimension of the *pedagogy and construct of care*. Without this *moral barometer*, students will fall short in ascertaining the ethical soundness of the media product and the processes involved in its creation. Undertaking media production must involve securing free and prior informed consent (FPIC) from the interlocutors and collaborators in the community. However, securing free and prior informed consent can, in fact, be a very tedious and contentious process, especially in the context where the subjects of study/research are not in an empowered position to decide for themselves. This social relationship is brought about by the uneven power dynamics between the academe and the community in favor of the former. Within this context, it is proper to seek permission from both the individuals and the community leaders in the locality and, more crucially, challenge this prevailing academic aristocracy.

> *Was I respectful in the way I photographed the subject/community?* (Cantor 2019: 266)

> Situational Analysis. *You asked permission from the interviewees if you can record the interview.* (Magpile 2016: 66)

> *Did I ask for permission to take the photos of people I photographed?* (Cantor 2019: 266)

> *Did I ask for permission or assistance from the community leaders before roaming around to take photos within the area?* (Cantor 2019: 266)

> *To take official photos of people and place, ask permission first before shooting.* (Cantor 2019: 257)

Chapter VII

CIVIC-INTENTIONED, PLACE-BASED AND CRITICAL MEDIA LITERACY

"Place are the literal common ground…Sharing perspectives on literal common ground means

shared points of reference in a whole new way— whole new set of relations to people and to place…" – Alexa Scully

Civic Media Literacies and Competencies

Consistent with civic media literacies' action orientation, teaching and learning must "translate into civic or social impact" (Mihailidis 2019). Along this line, media literacy education, therefore, needs to go beyond its traditionally restrictive academic goal and do away with its default *technico-functionalist bias*. It must also reach the stage of *collective reflective action* that builds upon the preceding stages of *self-reflectivity* (i.e., philosophy) and *reflective action* (i.e., practice) [McLaren & Crawford 2010]. The constructs and attributes associated with civic media literacies will remain in the abstract and theoretical realms if not applied in the collective and community level that is consistent with Tayag's (n.d.) conception of ideology in its "*maximal sense*" and Wallace's (2003 as cited in Kozakowska 2010) notion of criticism in its "*stronger, politically committed sense*".

Continuum of Social and Civic Spaces

Mihailidis (2018) describes civic media literacy to be operating in three distinct but interconnected social spaces, namely "*classrooms, communities,* and *civil organizations*" where the interventions and initiatives for learning can be conceived, situated, and enacted. Within the context of the increasing scale and scope of digital technology, *cybercommunity* may also be proposed for inclusion in what this study refers to as "continuum of social spaces". Online engagement, for instance, through the virtual community of practice may be employed and optimized to complement actual

community interaction but not (and never) to replace it. As an *expansive* and *immersive* exercise intended for collaborative learning, textbook tasks must be coherently designed to promote and catalyze *class-family, class-campus, class-civic organization, class-community,* and *class-cybercommunity* interactions**.** Correspondingly, the culture of knowledge sharing between and through these social and civic spaces must serve as one of the cornerstones of media and information literacy education. In formulating textbook tasks, academic authors need to optimize the full range of the continuum of social and civic spaces in ensuring that student learning and engagement can successfully and openly *take place* and *take root*.

In the specific context of the various socio-civic spaces noted above, the following questions were observed that sought to examine and understand (1) the phenomenon of socio-technological change in the family level, (2) the integration of media and information literacy in academic instruction and governance in the campus level, and (3) the information needs of the locality in relation to social and sectoral problems in the community level.

> *Ask your parents how they have adapted or adjusted to the new forms of media such as computer tablets, smart phones, and other forms of digital media. What were the changes that they needed to embrace and how did they cope with these changes?* (Alagaran 2019: 49)

> *Conduct a group interview with a media and information literacy teacher, librarian or any official in your school who is knowledgeable about how MIL is integrated in the programs of your school. Videotape the interview and present in class for discussion.* (Alagaran 2019: 49)

> *Assess the information needs of a community by initially conducting a focus group discussion with barangay or subdivision leaders on issues directly affecting them.* (Alagaran 2019: 113)

Expansive and Immersive Media Education

Students stand to benefit from the expansive and immersive nature of media literacy education through the *interdisciplinary, intersectoral,* and *intergenerational* learning experience that it can potentially provide and put into practice. In the specific case of the textbook tasks reviewed, the actual individuals and groups that the academic authors led the students to interact and engage with can be categorized as those within the family, classroom, campus, community, media industry and the broader governance and policy sector. Media education that involves interactive learning activities within and beyond the classroom expose the students to various *dimension of analysis* (e.g., communicational, technological, historical), *levels of analysis* (e.g., family, institutional, societal), *forms of media* (e.g., tri-media, multimedia, ethno-media), and *types of education* (e.g., formal, non-formal, informal). However, the list below only covers the tasks that require the students to undertake actual encounter and engagement with individuals, groups, and institutions and, therefore, does not include learning activities that are instantiated merely as simulation exercises.

Table 8: Individuals and groups instantiated for interview, documentary filming, and panel discussion

Categories	Individuals and groups	Authors
family	parents, elderly	Alagaran (2019), Zarate (2016), Yuvienco (2017)
classroom	classmates, peers, MIL teachers	Yuvienco (2017), Cantor (2019), Liquigan (2016), Zarate (2016), Magpile (2016)

campus	schoolmates, peers, school librarian, tutor, study advisor, school officials, History teacher, student leaders	Yuvienco (2017), Cantor (2019)
community	elderly, peers, local librarians, local artists, local tourists, surviving families of Martial Law atrocities, community leaders	Zarate (2016), Yuvienco (2017), Cantor (2019), Magpile (2016), Alagaran (2019)
media industry	editor, producer, celebrity, professional broadcaster, information specialist, web design expert, independent media producer	Cantor (2019), Liquigan (2016), Zarate (2016), Alagaran (2019)
governance and policy sector	education officials, regulatory agency officials, information and communication management officials	Cantor (2019), Alagaran (2019)

Through MIL's expansive and immersive learning attributes, students will be able to acquire new ideas and insights from many individuals and groups surrounding them, i.e., history teacher's knowledge about the role of media in strengthening democracy (Liquigan 2016: 27), elderly's information-seeking behavior and insight about indigenous media (Zarate 2016: 11, Alagaran 2019: 68), and stakeholders' perspectives about the global and local challenges in the media industry (Zarate 2016: 133), among others.

Classroom and Campus Level

Within the classroom level, the culture of dialogue and debate must be fostered and enhanced. Consistent with critical scholarship, this learning culture develops the skills of students in (1) identifying research problems, (2) gathering evidence, (3) organizing ideas, (4) developing incisive arguments, (5) revealing power asymmetries, (6) making sense of diverging points of view, (7) improving persuasive communication, and (8) sharpening counter-arguments. This will also enhance the potential of learners to become *people media* themselves by serving as the medium in which other individuals

as well as institutions will be able to acquire information and knowledge from.

Based on the textbook tasks covered, the following topics for class debate were featured and instantiated: (1) assessment of the Philippine media landscape based on the assumptions of normative theories (Liquigan 2016: 27) and (2) appropriateness of a specific film for minors (Alagaran 2019: 88). It was also commendable to initially expose the learners to a recorded debate to gain familiarity with the framing and format, similar with Zarate's (2016: 101) strategy of requiring them to do a preliminary media text analysis of a televised debate on reproductive health bill.

Clan and Family Level

The "MIL Time with Your Parents" section of Alagaran (2019) promotes *intergenerational knowledge sharing* between parents and children. In this task section, parents and elderlies are instantiated for interview to draw comparison and contrast based on their information need and experience in media use (Alagaran 2019: 73). The encounter is an opportunity for *mutual learning* by allowing the students to also share their knowledge about trends in media technologies and information ethics (Alagaran 2019: 125).

Aside from the school and the community, the clan is also a deep source of situated knowledge and local wisdom. As a counter-pedagogy, tasks may initially involve mapping one's genealogy and then eventually extend to the writing of *critical life history* or *critical family history*. For instance, students may interview relatives about their *counter-narratives* as state employees (e.g., public sector unionism) or *counter-memories* as residence of a locality (e.g., place-based activism). A crucial component

of this *other-oriented* pedagogy is *learning from* and *with* the family members. Parents, as demonstrated by Alagaran's task design, can actively take part in the learning process of their children by serving as interlocutors and key informants regarding relevant media-related knowledge, skills, attitude, and practices (KSAP).

In most of the textbooks under review, tasks would commonly require learners to interview elderly members of the family regarding their media preferences, habits, and lifestyles to make an intergenerational comparison of media utilization and consumption. As a pedagogical strategy, *intergenerational education* "promotes learning between and across generations" as well as "nurtures a culture of learning within families and communities" (UNESCO 2021). Building on this intergenerational exchange, follow-up tasks about social and sectoral issues must also be included such as describing and examining the nature and extent of the various forms of *media and information pathologies* that became prevalent in their respective socio-historical contexts and how they individually and collectively responded to these intersecting issues and challenges (e.g., technological divide, slow diffusion of technology, prohibitive cost of technological access, techno-stress, etc.).

Community and Household Technology Audit

Familiarity with the existing communication technologies in the immediate social environment is crucial in place-based media and information literacy. In most of the textbook tasks, the familiarization process starts in the *personal level* and *at home*. However, what is notable with this *inventory task* instantiated by Alagaran (2019: 159) is

the conscious attempt to factor in and practice *effectiveness, efficiency, economy,* and *equity* in media use (or the so-called 4 E's in governance).

> *Ask your parents to identify all the media equipment and computers in the house. Visit every room and check what media are available and where they are located? Come up with a list similar with an inventory. Identify the media which are still being used and those that are no longer used. Decide what to do with the media that are no longer used. Should you keep them, donate them, or offer them for auction?*
> (Alagaran 2019: 159)

While this audit is important in establishing basic understanding about the learners' immediate *socio-technological* and *socio-digital ecology*, this task however should also extend to the campus and the local communities. Familiarization with the broader media and information ecologies will also enable the learners to identify and map the *institutional and structural sources of information* in the locality, e.g., "library close to your home" (Yuvienco 2017: 16) and "buildings and edifices around you" (Zarate 2016: 38).

Community of Learners (CoL)

Every media and information literacy class possesses a heterogenous character and this brings about a huge potential in terms of enhancing and enriching the whole learning process. Complement this with an equally diverse campus and community composition, the teaching-learning praxis for certain would open-up to an even more engaging and profound knowledge sharing. The school itself as a community of learners (CoL) and a community of practice (CoP) brings a vast opportunity to broaden and deepen the students' learning encounter. Engagement with fellow learners from other sections and year levels is advantageous in widening the social and academic

base to *acquire knowledge from* and *share knowledge with*. This can be extended further by including the school's alumni in the existing social and academic network. As resource persons and co-learners, the alumni network is a veritable mine of diverse knowledge, especially when their experience from their respective fields of inquiry and employment are tapped for in-depth interview, panel discussion, and project mentoring on matters of relevant concerns to the localities (e.g., public health, sustainable livelihood, participatory governance, heritage conservation, and ecological management, among others).

Deliberative Dialogue

Considering Media and Information Literacy's curricular objective of achieving "greater political participation and more cohesive social units" (Department of Education 2013), *deliberative dialogue* can then be argued as an effective means to "integrate issues of social justice" and "pursue civic action" (Murti 2009), especially on struggles of multisectoral character. When accomplished employing the social justice framework, media and information literacy holds the potential of engendering political participation and fostering community solidarity. Mutri (2009) also added that deliberative dialogue "provides a space for multiple perspectives". Within the context of media and information literacy education, this multiplicity of perspectives covers the frameworks and standpoints of students, school authorities, parents, civic organizations, local communities, and other development stakeholders. However, Mutri (2009) explained that the employment of deliberative dialogue contrary to traditional debate "goes beyond adversarial forms of communication" and, therefore, involves instead the collaborative

culture of dealing with “conflicting choices”. This, therefore, requires the conscious acts of crossing borders, identifying common grounds, and cultivating empathy.

An illustrative case is the community dialogue task required by Zarate (2016) in a culminating activity for a topic about “media organizations and stakeholders”. In this learning activity, Zarate (2016: 132-133) instructed the students to organize a community dialogue featuring a *community of practice* that encompasses the heterogenous composition of “media industry players and actors”. The students are also advised to ensure the democratic representation of “all gender orientations” and “other ethnic groups” in this community-based task.

> *The idea is to hear the situation from the media players and actors themselves. The media actors are expected to have a knowledge of the industries they work for, an appreciation of its dynamics, and an awareness of the challenges of the local and global environment.* (Zarate 2016: 133)

Collective Responsibility vs. Individual Responsibility

In problematizing social responsibility, this set of questions below deals with one of the critical issues raised by Mihailidis (2018: 5) about the tendency of “contemporary media literacy initiatives and interventions” to focus merely on “individual responsibility”. From this set of textbook tasks, a pattern of increasing *level of engagement* and *accountability* can be observed, starting with the individual person then the community and even holding the private corporations accountable to the public regarding their excesses and abuses (Campos 2016). This line of questioning subscribes to the idea that while individuals must possess *personal efficacy* to effect self-change, there is an even greater need to elevate the strategy in the collective level of influence and engagement. While *behavioral change* in the individual level is important, transformation

must also manifest in the structural realm to ensure *success, scalability,* and *sustainability*. In the way the questions below were formulated, the author clearly and deliberately articulated how confronting *obesity* in both its *nutritional* and *informational sense* also have individual and collective dimensions and repercussions, and that – as a social malaise – it must also be apprehended how and why large businesses are, in fact, guilty of the offense and hence should be answerable to the public (i.e., *critical accountability*). In the case of Liquigan's task (2016), while vigilance is crucial in countering "deceptive PR and advertising" in the individual level, it is also important to elevate it in the collective degree as well as hold private commercial entities and public regulatory agencies accountable.

> *What is the role and responsibility of an individual when it comes to overcoming (information) obesity?* (Campos 2016: 147)
>
> *What is the role and responsibility of communities to help people stay clear of (information) obesity?* (Campos 2016: 147)
>
> *What is the role and responsibility of corporations in regulating or perpetuating an unhealthy or healthy appetite?* (Campos 2016: 147)
>
> *"Using your knowledge of media and information literacy, how can you avoid deceptive PR and advertising?"* (Liquigan 2016: 41)

Contextual and Community-based Media Education

Context-oriented media literacy education especially when locally situated can potentially contribute to the heightened social consciousness and civic engagement of students. It is a common observation that student outputs only end up gathering dusts in shelves or being forgotten in oblivion in electronic file folders divested of the

opportunity of being employed for the benefit of the communities. In fulfilling this objective to be useful in the community setting, tasks therefore must also involve prior *social investigation* or *environmental scanning* to align and attune the class projects and programs to the actual social and sectoral needs of the locality. Such is the critical importance of needs assessment similar with the one interposed by Alagaran (2019), to wit:

> *Assess the information needs of a community by initially conducting a focus group discussion with barangay or subdivision leaders on issues directly affecting them.*
> (Alagaran 2019: 113)

> *Based on the priority issue, plan a project for the community and decide what and how the information needs of the specific audiences must be addressed.*
> (Alagaran 2019: 113)

The table below summarizes the dimensions, elements, and procedures that involve various community-based advocacy campaigns in the textbook tasks.

Table 9: Advocacy campaign tasks

Dimensions, elements, and procedures	Advocacy campaign plan (Alagaran	Community FGD (Alagaran 2019: 113)	Community mobilization (Zarate 2016: 87)	Community dialogue (Zarate 2016: 132-133)	Online social advocacy (Liquigan 2016: 141)	Participatory media production guideline (Campos 2016: 104-105)

	2019: 43)					
Students are given the opportunity to identify a social issue /community problem of choice that they want to address.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
The activity involves the assessment of the community's information needs.	✓	✓	-	✓	-	✓
The knowledge, belief, and positionality of the audience are determined.	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓
The community mobilization/ campaign objectives are asked/clarified.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
The campaign messaging/ community dialogue theme is asked/clarified.	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓
The communication media channel to be used is asked/clarified and its logistical dimension is considered.	✓	✓	-	-	✓	✓
The communication strategy is asked/clarified.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Students are asked what	✓	✓	✓	-	-	✓

transformation they want to achieve from their audience.						
Feedback about the plan is sought from co-learners (e.g., brainstorming session).	✓	✓	✓	-	-	-
Democratic and ethical representation is ensured (i.e., by sector, gender, and ethnicity).	-	-	-	✓	-	✓
The activity involves the pre-testing of the communication materials.	-	✓	-	-	-	-
The activity involves actual community engagement and integration.	-	✓	✓	✓	-	-
The interest and welfare of the youth is accorded importance.	-	-	-	✓	-	-
The completion of the activity involves self-evaluation, documentation, and/or synthesis.	✓	✓	-	✓	-	-
Additional information about the advocacy is provided.	-	-	-	-	✓	-
The actual implementation involves the monitoring of the participants' level	-	-	-	-	✓	-

of engagement and quality of feedback.						
The project involves the participation of the stakeholders.	audience, beneficiaries	FGD participant/ audience	audience	panel of resource persons	online participation (comment and reaction)	N/A

Sources:
Alagaran, JRQ. (2019). MIL: Empowering the Discerning Audiences. Quezon City: Abiva.
Zarate, JEZ. (2016). Media and Information Literacy. Quezon City: Rex Book Store.
Liquigan, B. (2016). Media and Information Literacy. Makati City: Diwa Learning Systems, Inc.
Campos, P. (2016). From Cave to Cloud: Media and Information Literacy for Today. Quezon City: Phoenix Publishing House.

The advocacy campaigns vary whether they are fully executed or not. For instance, Alagaran's (2019: 43 and 113) interposed advocacy work is limited only to the planning stage while his subsequent community-oriented task involves the production of advocacy materials and the actual launching of the project.

> *Choose a particular social issue that prevails in your community or area. Design a campaign plan for the class to address this social issue.* (Alagaran 2019: 47)

> *Pretest the materials produced and get feedback from peers on the initial draft or prototype of the materials. Revise based on suggestions and launch the project.* (Alagaran 2019: 113)

Zarate's (2016: 87 and 132-133) reform-oriented tasks also involve actual community engagement through a *community viewing* of an originally produced advocacy material and a *community dialogue* featuring various media industry stakeholders. The community-oriented tasks of Liquigan (2016: 141) and Campos (2016: 104-105), however, are limited only to an online social advocacy page (but involves monitoring of the people's level of participation and feedback) and the conceptualization of participatory media production, respectively.

Of these six advocacy campaigns, only Alagaran's community focus group discussion (2019: 43) involves *pre-testing* of media materials which runs consistent with the crucial first step of requiring the identification and assessment of the community's information needs. Consistent with the democratic agenda of mobilizing communities, feedbacks from co-learners in school and community collaborators must form part of advocacy planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation such as the tasks that follow.

> *Get feedback from your teacher and classmates.* (Alagaran 2019: 47)
>
> *Pretest the materials produced and get feedback from peers on the initial draft or prototype of the materials. Revise based on suggestions.* (Alagaran 2019: 113)
>
> *After you have consolidated your thoughts about the target audience, it is now time to brainstorm on a material text that you think can appeal to them and can make them act.* (Zarate 2016: 87)
>
> *The advocacy page will be evaluated using the following considerations: level of participation as well as comments by the visitors during the first week of publication of the advocacy page.* (Liquigan 2016: 141)

Community Mobilization

Consistent with place-based approach, the solution-driven task by Zarate (2016: 87) seeks to introduce the learners to "decide on a community problem they want to address" in which she underscored the need to "be very specific about the problem and be very concrete about what they want to achieve". Specifically, Zarate instantiated "doable projects" such as "waste segregation", "disaster kits", and "eradication of plastic bag use". As a strategy, the author also requires the students to know the profile of their target audience to ensure the advocacy project's success, sustainability, and scalability.

Through critical place-based inquiry (Langran & DeWitt 2020), students get to "read the world" by anchoring the lesson and its application in the real-world context. By "understanding the place and how it matters", the students will be able to apprehend "what is missing" and hence identify what 'communicative action' is needed to address the issue in question. By "leveraging technologies", the phenomenon under scrutiny will be mapped and documented for analysis, validation, and assessment. Through contextualized critical questions (or critical line of questioning), the task will be able to communicate the narratives from multiple (and even divergent) perspectives and render them for presentation in a more intelligible and hence accessible form. The strength of any community-oriented media project draws from the conscious effort of "knowing thy audience" and "reading the world". Similar with the conduct of *social investigation and class analysis* (SICA), questions such as the following will reveal the prevailing substructure (i.e., economic aspect), superstructure (i.e., political, cultural, and philosophical dimensions), and social forces (i.e., 'power elites') in the community.

> *What is their economic status?*
> *What are the beliefs they hold?*
> *Who do they listen to?* (Zarate 2016: 87)

In Zarate's (2016: 132-133) community-oriented culminating activity, strong emphasis is accorded to the need for stakeholders' dialogue and engagement. Essentially, this can serve as the beginning of the sustained act of 'border crossing' and solidarity building. The holding of a deliberative dialogue about the structural challenges that collectively confront the media stakeholders is a crucial first step in organizing and mobilizing their ranks as a sector and in forging strong solidarity and broad alliance with other similarly situated sectoral groups.

Advocacies must bring about political empowerment to the intended beneficiaries. While most advocacies are well-meaning in intention, textbook authors should also be very circumspect in their language use. For instance, the instruction which states that "you are to determine your target audience which will be *dependent* on the advocacy you have in mind" (Liquigan 2016: 141) could have been more democratically rendered and hence more politically empowering if it used the phrase '*benefit from*' instead of "*be dependent on*".

Community Engagement

An essential component of the community engagement process is the conduct of a focus group discussion (FGD) that is interposed by Alagaran (2019) to determine the "information needs of the community". However, the consultation must not only be limited to the "barangay or subdivision leaders" but should also be extended to other sectoral groups, especially the socially excluded and voiceless (Alagaran 2019). Given the multiplicity of issues involved, Alagaran emphasized that the effort and attention must center on the priority policy agenda and prevailing development debates in the locality. It is also along this line that the demographic, sociographic, and psychographic profile of the target audience must be understood upon which the message to "influence their action" will be anchored (Alagaran 2019: 43).

As a transformative *course* and *discourse*, textbook producers must not forget the critical role of media and information literacy in *capacitating* and *activating* the students and the youth sector as *community enablers*. Towards this end, the alternatively conceived textbook task design should be framed to help address the pressing

development issues faced by the locality, with the students as well as their community collaborators in the forefront. Ultimately, this alternative MIL praxis must be understood as an integral part of the broader liberation, human rights, and social justice movement.

> *Assess the information needs of a community by initially conducting a focus group discussion with barangay or subdivision leaders on issues directly affecting them.* (Alagaran 2019: 113)

> *Based on the priority issue, plan a project for the community and decide what and how the information needs of the specific audiences must be addressed.* (Alagaran 2019: 113)

> *Who is your audience? What do they know about the issue and where are they coming from? How will you write your message to your audience to influence their action?* (Alagaran 2019: 43)

> *Create a theme for your community dialogue, something that will resonate the questions and challenges you would like to register as the youth who are viewed as the future leaders and administrators of the nation.* (Zarate 2016: 133)

Table 10: Media and Information Literacy seminar-workshop tasks

Dimensions and elements	**Alternative classroom learning experience** (Liquigan 2016: 122)	**Community MIL seminar** (Zarate 2016: 57-58)	**MIL seminar** (Zarate 2016: 35-36)
Panelists and facilitators	media, information and communication scholars and practitioners in the public and private sectors as "experts"	students as discussants and facilitators	students as discussants and facilitators
Audience	elementary school students	academic personnel or local government unit personnel	participants from the school and/or community

Topic	Media and information literacy	Media and information literacy (with focus on representation, structure, and chronology)	Media and information literacy
Media texts to be analyzed	film and television programs	"prime time newscast of local free channels or the local cable news networks"	advertisements from magazines or billboards
Materials needed	to be agreed upon by the stakeholders	audio and video-taped materials	board, writing instruments, tape, LCD projector
Duration	to be agreed upon by the stakeholders	-	2 hours
Guide question themes and subthemes	-	'anatomy of headline news' (in terms of introduction, composition, chronology, and inserts)	media producer, creative approaches, media reception, privileged and muted values and voices, underlying motive
Participation of the community/stakeholders	consultation with the panel of speakers and workshop attendees	workshop attendees and participants	coordination with local leaders/administrative heads, workshop participants, and attendees

Sources: Zarate, J. (2016). Media and Information Literacy. Quezon City: Rex Book Store

Liquigan, B. (2016). Media and Information Literacy. Makati City: Diwa Learning Systems, Inc.

In Liquigan's (2016: 122) seminar-workshop task, the term "experts" was used to identify the panel of speakers. Strikingly, they are depicted in sharp contrast with the audience who are represented and described to possess "limited understanding of the forces that govern media, communication, and information". This rendering can be interpreted either positively or otherwise. Positive in the sense that the instruction allows the students to understand the profile of their younger audience. Negative in the

context that it underestimates the prior knowledge of their prospective participants, thereby markedly defining the demarcation line between the so-called “experts” and their audience.

The flexibility accorded to the students by Zarate (2016: 57) in determining the “extent of the community activity” is an opportunity to broaden and deepen the discourse and engagement. Correspondingly, the learning activity in question along with the previous community mobilization and community dialogue tasks can serve as opportunities to introduce, promote, and mainstream *community media* and *community communication* in the locality. Zarate (2016: 58) also reiterates to the students the importance of constantly “drawing up the right questions”. Consistent with its “discursive function”, any question must consistently possess the *empowering, transformative,* and *liberating intent* (Athanasiadou 1991) to facilitate the “shift in consciousness” among the intended audience (Zarate 2016: 58).

Regrettably, not all outputs are synthesized, documented, and compiled and this failure in *information and knowledge management* foregoes many opportunities for learning, assessment, research, curriculum development, and instructional reform. As such, these efforts by Zarate (2016) and Alagaran (2019) in requiring the students to summarize and synthesize outputs demonstrate profound respect and value to the interlocutors and the ideas which they generously and trustingly shared during the seminar-workshops and community dialogues. These compiled summaries and syntheses also serve as valuable inputs in the formulation and implementation of evidence-based development interventions and policy solutions in the community.

Based on the foregoing exposition, it can be argued that the level of engagement

with the local community in textbook tasks varies in degree, i.e., from being participatory and democratic (where community members take part from planning to evaluation) to being tokenistic (where the community members merely act as attendees or beneficiaries).

Community and Communication

Local engagement and collaboration must involve strong community-oriented communication. It is therefore not a coincidence that the words communication (*communicare*) and community (*communis*) have evolved from the same etymological roots such that in reality one cannot exist and thrive without the other, and that the two are after all *mutually defining* and *co-constitutive*. Within the context of a community-based media literacy seminar or social mobilization program, both internal and external communication are believed to have essential roles to play in ensuring the democratic and dynamic engagement between stakeholders within the campus and in the community. The former (internal communication) involves the responsibilities of coordinating, brainstorming, and delegating while the latter (external communication) encompasses the stages of informing the community about the partnership, encouraging their participation, and soliciting their feedbacks.

Community Partners

Community-oriented activities may involve engaging with an "active, fully functioning" community-based organization as interposed by Zarate (2016: 35-36). Alternatively, it is also possible to consider partnering with a less active community-based organization

and adopt what Mihailidis instantiated as *agency by proxy* (i.e., power to act on behalf of the other). Agency by proxy is conceived as a preliminary stage in the *empowerment process* which ideally must become *personal* on the part of the concerned individuals/groups and then elevated to the level and degree of *collective agency*. Agency by proxy works on the assumption that some communities have long been encumbered by *false consciousness* such that they are oblivious of their exploited/subordinated condition and collective/empowering potential, hence the need for *enablers* and *catalysts*.

> *If you decide to do it in your community, you ought to coordinate with the barangay, or any other community civic organization that is active and fully functioning.*
> (Zarate 2016: 35-36)

Community Folks

The task of Magpile (2016: 133) that requires the students to feature "ordinary people" from the local community who can serve as "role models for public service and leadership" acts as an indirect challenge to the country's prevailing and dysfunctional *elite governance* and *dynastic politics*. The instruction states that the output needs to "persuade people to vote wisely in the coming elections" by presenting ordinary individuals with exemplary public service record as *viable alternatives*. This learning activity is noteworthy for its objective of employing media and communication technologies to promote transformative politics and good governance.

In a separate task by Zarate (2016: 44), she proposed that the students prepare a "video portrait of an ordinary person in the campus", defining the latter as "somebody whose life and work is hardly noticed or rarely given the attention they deserve in spite

of his/her valuable contribution to campus life". In this documentary film task by Zarate, she required the students to "use open-ended questions that would elicit a substantial response", aimed at privileging the voice of the *interlocutor*. The approach being instantiated is *socio-technical* and *agentive* in character by making sense of (1) "decisions made with the use of the camera" and (2) "how the camera help tell the significant work that the subject does". It also possesses a very strong self-reflective attribute which is necessary in becoming an ethical and accountable media producer, to wit:

> *Evaluate your work. Go back to the decisions you made with the use of the camera, the angles that you created, the use of the magnification capacity through the lens that zooms in and out, and the capacity of the camera to pan or tilt. Why did you do it? What was the effect on how you portrayed your subject? How did the camera help you tell the significant work that your subject does?* (Zarate 2016: 44)

Community Information

In one self-reflection activity, Liquigan (2016: 96) invoked Potter's *information processing tasks.* Consistent with the framework of critical place-based inquiry, the 'filtering message' stage of this process aligns strongly with the practice of 'reading the world' because it involves filtering out and filtering in "messages in the environment". Essentially, filtering message is a form of *critical* thinking because consistent with the term's etymological origin (i.e., "krinein" which means to "separate, judge, or decide") it involves separating what is useful information from what is not and choosing what pertinent information to utilize and adopt. In another learning activity similar with this one by Zarate (2016: 28), the students are instructed to "map out a strategy that identifies the steps necessary to secure needed information" as a *filter mechanism*.

Given the excessive quantity of available information but of varying levels of quality and usefulness, students need to be taught how to manage, deal, and navigate this complex and challenging information and communication landscape (i.e., infosphere).

With respect to MIL's information literacy component, limited tasks and learning activities are rendered and interposed that will identify, locate, evaluate, and produce the *information needs* of various sectors in the local communities, especially the marginalized and subaltern, i.e., farmers, fisherfolks, indigenous people, and the working class. With reference to the vulnerable farming sector, the following valuable data and information must be instantiated in the textbook tasks as subjects of inquiry: climate resilient agro-ecological farm practices, increasing threat of alien invasive species, and the alternative sustainable markets for agricultural products, among others. In the context of the precarious laborers, the following labor market information are conceived to be useful: occupational health and safety statistics, extent of joblessness, pattern of job displacement, among others. Fundamentally, media and information literacy only becomes inclusive and empowering if it is serving the development agenda of the economically disadvantaged, politically marginalized, culturally discriminated, and the *information poor*. Aside from the indispensability of strengthening the information literacy component, there is also an even greater need to mainstream and cultivate its more progressive counterpart, i.e., *critical information literacy*, where the struggles for economic, political and information resources are foregrounded and problematized.

Collective Action

The question of Liquigan (2016: 98) inquiring the learners about the social movement which they have already participated in is a sensible way to let them reflect about the role of social media in collective action and solidarity work. For those who have not joined yet in any, Liquigan then asked the students "which among those that had already transpired would you (they) have most likely participated if you (they) had the opportunity?", complemented with a follow-up hypothetical question about how they would have employed the Internet and the social media as platforms in forwarding their causes and advocacies.

> *Are there any local social movements that you have participated in so far? If none, which among those that had already transpired would you have most likely participated in if you had the opportunity? In these instances, how would you have utilized social media and the world wide web?* (Liquigan 2016: 98)

Participatory Media Education

The vulnerable sectors continue to be underrepresented in most media narratives. If at all foregrounded as the central theme, their depiction is misrepresented and distorted in both mainstream media perspective and practice. The marginalized communities also persist as unprivileged/underprivileged voice in conventional media and education for either being represented as entirely missing in the storyline (i.e., invisible) or only portrayed as mere background element (i.e., tokenistic). While there are attempts to incorporate textbook tasks with community dimensions, some of the relegated roles to the community members are usually that of passive attendees and beneficiaries. While the well-meaning aim of the textbook authors is to

train and empower the students through the application of their MIL knowledge and skills, this however should also be pursued with the best interest of the local communities in mind to avoid *unintentionally* committing *symbolic violence* and *epistemic injustice.* As such, community-based media projects must democratically and consistently involve all the stakeholders throughout the stages of planning, consultation, workshop, feedback, and validation.

In a task that involves participatory production, Campos (2016: 104-105) outlined relevant questions as guideposts to make media literacy serve its socio-civic mission of engendering social justice education and upholding public interest. Veritably, the set of questions can also function as a comprehensive *checklist* to ensure that (1) the community-oriented media initiative contributes in the fulfillment of the people's development agenda, (2) the media technologies are leveraged to ensure the benefit of the broadest section of the population, (3) the marginalized sectors are democratically represented, (4) the preconceived notions about social and sectoral issues are subjected to critical questioning, and (5) the organizers are ethical and accountable in their decisions and actions throughout the entire course of project management (Campos 2016: 104-105). In addition, the following questions were also raised to promote reflective, ethical, and rights-based media production, to wit:

> *What are we explicitly saying in the media message, and what are we silencing or silent about?* (Campos 2016: 105)

> *Who will benefit from the media message that we are producing and who will be at the losing end?* (Campos 2016: 105)

A critical dimension that must also be prudently decided upon by the stakeholders is the schedule (i.e., *temporality*) and venue (i.e., *spatiality*) of the community-based MIL events and activities. First and foremost, the time and duration must not be disruptive to the life-work rhythm of the community (e.g., some fisherfolks prepare their equipment and gears during certain period of the day and set out to work in the evening until dawn). The venue is equally important because it must be physically accessible, and it also needs to exude an atmosphere conducive to democratic discussion and deliberation.

Place-based Paradigm

Critical place-based inquiry and critical media literacy are complementary approaches that can forge deeper and more transformative learning engagement between the students and their local communities. The community is a veritable mine of contextualized data and information as well as *situated knowledge* and *folk wisdom*. It provides the students with broader and richer understanding of their place's ecological, geographic, demographic, historical, economic, political, cultural, communicational, linguistic, technological, and intellectual realities upon which they can base their social analyses and propose action points both as *scholar-critics* and *citizen-critics*. Towards this end, schools and communities must be strong allies in (1) promoting local values, (2) protecting biodiversity, (3) engendering intersectoral dialogue, and (4) ending all embodiments of unjust policies and practices.

Broadly speaking, Greenland (2013) as cited in Ontong and Le Grange (2014) argued that place-oriented learning must not be equated to mere intellectual and

academic exercise because to a greater extent it is more associated with the conscious, active, committed, and mutually defining acts of "*studying, caring and creating*". In the mainstream intellectual domain, heavier premium is accorded to knowledge *over* virtues and under the prevailing knowledge regimes, certain *systems of knowledge* and *ways of knowing* are privileged over others. As a counterculture, place-based inquiry promotes a research tradition and values system that are *connected, creative,* and *critical*.

Mainstream media spectacles tend to numb the collective and critical consciousness of individuals and societies. These types of desensitizing and distorted media representation also alienate consumers from their cultural rootedness and act as forms of *escape* from the urgent task of confronting their social realities in the community and as a sector. In a vicious cycle, this attitude perpetuates a *culture of apathy* and worsens the *threat of placelessness*, especially among the youth some of whom have yet to fully take root in and deepen engagement with their respective communities and localities. Reflective of the contemporary social realities, Rogers, et al. (2013) define *placelessness* as the "homogenizing effects of modernity, e.g., commercialism, mass consumption, standard planning regulations, alienation, and obsession with speed and movement". As a counter-tradition, critical place-based media and information literacy contributes to the objective of confronting (and reversing) this deterritorializing socio-cultural pattern and re-*placing* it with (and reconceiving it along) the *ethics of care*, *politics of resistance*, and *pedagogy of transformation*.

In general, learners vary widely in their level of familiarity and engagement with their respective communities and localities. Some are totally detached. Others may only possess certain level of social connection. While there may also be those who are

already deeply rooted in their local communities. The role of critical place-based media and information literacy is therefore to start the process of familiarization for those who are yet to be acquainted, deepen the engagement of those who have already achieved a certain level of connection, and sustain the collaboration of those who already have a deeply founded relationship with their communities. As such, curriculum specialists, classroom educators, and instructional materials developers must be aware of these varying levels of commitment and engagement as well as the need for appropriate types of pedagogical intervention and initiative.

At this point, it is crucial to make sense of where *place-based* and *critical place-based inquiries* converge and diverge – discursively and pedagogically. Place-based approach adheres to the strategy of employing local solutions to local problems. Within this context, local solutions are understood to be interventions and initiatives that are attuned and aligned to the community context and informed by indigenous knowledge and folk wisdom. Termed as *new localism*, this approach to learning affords the students who are local citizens themselves to "create patterns of connectedness and mutuality", thereby reinforcing the "foundation of community well-being" (Gruenewald & Smith 2008). As a counterpoint to orthodox pedagogies, this approach also contributes to local dynamism by regenerating and reigniting interaction among members of the community as well as between communities. The place-based textbook tasks and learning activities can also pave the way to the (1) dialogic exchange of insights, (2) co-construction of meanings, and (3) co-development of sustainable solutions among the learners, their co-learners as well as co-inhabitants. Critical place-based inquiry, on the other hand, possesses all these mutually reinforcing attributes but with

particular emphasis on (1) the institutionalized power differences, (2) the social circumstances that warrant them, and (3) the countermeasures in bringing about an alternative socio-educational order.

A strong place-based orientation starts with the immediate surroundings and in the case of a learning activity instantiated by Alagaran (2019: 159) it begins at *home*. This particular task involves conducting an inventory of media technologies in each of the room inside the house, with specific focus on the following set of information, i.e., (1) availability and location of equipment, (2) use or non-use of equipment, (3) re-arrangement of the position of equipment, and (4) disposal of equipment (e.g., through donation or auction). In addition to this set of preliminary coverage and consideration, the task in question can serve as a springboard to discuss contentious *eco-technological issues* such as e-waste disposal, ecological footprint as well as digital divide, among others.

> *Ask your parents to identify all the media equipment and computers in the house. Visit every room and check what media are available and where they are located? Come up with a list similar to an inventory. Identify the media which are still being used and those that are no longer used. Decide what to do with the media that are no longer used. Should you keep them, donate them, or offer them for auction?* (Alagaran 2019: 159)

> *Among the media that you want to keep, decide whether you want to retain them where they are or relocate them in the house. You need to work with your parents in rearranging these materials based on the needs of the users in your house.*
> (Alagaran 201: 159)

Place-Based Considerations

Overtime, what is formerly known as *local/localized learning* has been termed as

place-based and community-based education (Demarest 2015). At the core of place-based inquiry is the "authentic investigation that brings the students out into the community" (Demarest 2015). Within this context, the *place* is conceived as a co-creation of individuals and societies in dynamic, dialogical, and dialectical interaction. As a social construct, the place is imbued with economic, political, and cultural elements that bring about profound meaning and transformation to any given physico-geographic space.

Similar with her other media production tasks, these narrative and documentary film requirements of Cantor (2016) likewise possess strong place-based attributes that encompass various local dimensions and elements – both common and uncommon, e.g., local history, local events, and even local *paranormal* phenomena. Based on the prescribed tasks, one of the critical components of the project which the group must judiciously decide upon is the location/set of locations for the video shoot. Subscribing to the basic tenets of critical place-based inquiry, this decision involves serious consideration based on many factors, i.e., geographical, demographic, economic, political, communicational, cultural, and even spiritual. Take for instance the photo essay and film-making tasks that instantiate the following themes among the long list of options wherein the element of *place* plays a *central* and *powerful* role: “children’s access to good education”, “how climate change affect my community”, “support local stores and products”, and “a dying tradition or practice in our community/heritage”, “any historical aspect of your town/city/province”, “special events in your community”, and “scary or paranormal phenomenon in your town” (Cantor 2019: 265 & 277).

Place-Based Questions

Critical place-based pedagogy also allows the learners to develop problem-solving skill that is grounded on the contextualized and holistic understanding of the phenomenon under review. Along this line, the need to formulate *localized and situated questions* becomes even more salient. Such set of socio-cognitive skills will enable the students to communicate and connect with the local community by identifying, apprehending, and problematizing what legitimate issues collectively matter to them. Alagaran (2019) and Zarate (2016) sought to achieve this objective by proposing a focus group discussion about information need and then asking the students to formulate well-thought questions for the community mobilization project. Essentially, *local contexts* necessitate *localized questions* that will in turn give rise to *localized answers*. Prospectively, these localized answers can provide broader and deeper awareness about the community and, consequently, bring about more probing and profound questions.

Community-Oriented Media and Environmental Education

A strong association with the place can potentially develop profound valuing of *intergenerational and ecological ethics* among the learners. Such is embodied in the practice of promoting and instilling social justice and ecological integrity early in their age. This special bond with the place will also allow the students to cultivate the *knowledge about* and *care for* their local communities. From the post-humanist standpoint, place-based consciousness must holistically encompass the *human*, *non-human*, and *more-than-human* dimensions. Specifically, it will also enable them to

discover the abundance and potential of the *bio-cultural systems* surrounding them and why protecting and conserving these material and non-material elements is their *political* and *moral duty*. Among the textbook tasks and learning activities that possess this discursive and pedagogical potential are the following:

> *What are the biggest lessons I gathered from this project regarding photographing the following: people, community, environment, other elements?* (Cantor 2019: 266)
>
> Photo essay: *How climate change affects my community* (Cantor 2019: 265)
>
> *Examine the buildings and edifices around you. You can try with your school building. Try to probe its manner of construction by simply putting most of your senses at work – touch, sight, smell. Ask yourselves these questions: What are the foundations? Can you actually see them? What materials were used?* (Zarate 2016: 38)
>
> *Think of yourself as an audio researcher who gathers sounds for a production house's sound archive…to create a sample of a sound collage. You may want to combine voice and environmental sound.* (Liquigan 2016: 176)

Learning, therefore, only becomes meaningful when its "presence is felt in the promotion of life of the community where it exists" (Dulay 2004). This rootedness of the school in the local community renders learning profound, relevant, and relationship-enhancing. From the critical place-based perspective, this notion of the "promotion of life" extends to various life-forms, i.e., human and more-than-human. It is along this ethico-pedagogical framework that media and information literacy can be employed and deployed as a feasible platform for environmental education and advocacy.

Through critical place-based media literacy education, the students will also be able to discover and rediscover sustainable recreational sites and activities in their respective local areas that are facilitative of life-affirming and ecologically conscious learning, e.g., mini-forests, plant nurseries, and crop breeding sites. This can also serve as viable platform in promoting and engendering critical science and

environmental communication through the use of media and information technologies to interrogate eco-development issues such as deforestation, land-use conversion, land degradation, crop conversion, unsustainable water use, food insecurity, overgrazing, and animal cruelty, among others.

In interweaving narratives, the self-assessment question asking the students about the various lessons they learned in relation to photographing "people, community, environment and other elements" (Cantor 2019: 266) is a coherent embodiment of the inquiry-based attribute of place-based pedagogy. Aside from skills development, the task in question also promotes the following moral values and ethical practices: self-reflectivity, other-awareness, social inclusion, professionalism, and free and prior informed consent (FPIC).

> *What are the biggest lessons I gathered from this project regarding photographing the following: people, community environment, and other elements?* (Cantor 2019: 266)

> *What are the biggest lessons I learned from being a media practitioner who uses a camera to show and tell people's lives and stories?* (Cantor 2019: 266)

Place-Based Praxis

The task requiring the students to "mimic existing national or local newspapers in their region or…invent a new one" (Cantor 2019: 257) presents a good opportunity for the students to exercise their media and information literacy skills and apply them in a specific socio-cultural milieu, especially if the learners choose to conceptualize a new publication in the local context. The wide latitude of freedom accorded to the learners in allowing them to suggest their "own coverage area of interest" (Cantor 2019: 258) also opens vast opportunities to discover the many unexplored and underexplored sites and

stories about their respective localities. In another project, Cantor (2019: 265) proposed a list of "sample photo essay concepts to execute" and, as pointed out previously, a number of them are strongly place-based in character, e.g., (1) "supporting local stores and products", (2) "improving tourism in our city/province", (3) "understanding how climate change affects my community", and (4) "reviving a dying tradition or practice in our community/heritage". From the standpoint of critical place-based inquiry, the above-cited topics can be *alternatively* (re)configured and (re)framed to reflect (1) how the unregulated heavy importation adversely impacted the local industries, (2) how mass tourism plundered the local ecologies, (3) how unsustainable economic activities caused and exacerbated the climate crisis, and (4) how globalization has overshadowed and undermined indigenous culture. In this respect, the students are then afforded the opportunity to critically employ quantitative and qualitative data (i.e., "stats and stories") in making sense of the broad, complex, and intersecting structural malaise that confront the locality.

Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices

From the colonial up to the contemporary period, indigenous sources of information continue to be undermined and eroded by the mainstream and more dominant counterpart. Within this context, students of media and information literacy therefore need to be taught and enlightened about the inherent value of indigenous knowledge systems and practices in the nation's collective being and becoming. As a "zone of transaction" (Genette 1997), this profound valuing and reverence for indigenous culture and tradition can be concretely embodied through the textbook tasks that the learners

need to act upon and carry out.

In a reading task, Yuvienco (2017) forwarded the perspective about indigenous knowledge as “information systems management”. For instance, he illustrated the Laguna copperplate inscription as an “artifact that gives the future generations a deeper insight on how the past can be a source of collective guide for the society” (Yuvienco 2017: 52). Viewed as a *social technology*, indigenous knowledge itself can serve as a vital tool in “collecting, storing, preserving, and even repurposing indigenous knowledge systems in a time of rapidly accelerating change” (Yuvienco 2017: 53). As a *social anchorage*, indigenous knowledge which is essentially place-based also allows the learners to remain deeply grounded on their collective and local memories, histories, and narratives.

In the textbook task of Liquigan (2016: 47), for instance, the students were asked about which information source (i.e., “indigenous, library, Internet, mass media”) would they prefer to employ in learning about a specified list of themes. Conceivably, these diverse but interconnected themes that follow can be potentially answered fully or partly by indigenous information: “human genome project, cultural practices of the Lumads in Mindanao, current state of tourism and hospitality industry in the Philippines, political conflicts and strife in different parts of the world, agricultural practices in Central Luzon, recent events in the last decades that changed the world, the ASEAN integration, and the history of Bangsamoro”, among others (Liquigan 2016: 47).

The same can also be argued about Alagaran’s (2019: 96) task that inquired the students to identify their preferred information source (i.e., “mass media, Internet, experts, community elders, or officials”) for the following varied but interlinked subject

matters, i.e., “climate change, health and nutrition, local politics, science and technology, market prices, disaster and risks, sports and wellness, water and sanitation, movies and entertainment, product and service”.

Considering the vast knowledge and wisdom possessed by the community elders about indigenous societies and ecologies, they can certainly contribute substantive insights and reflections in the deliberative dialogues and critical conversations. However, considering the strong leaning and heavy reliance of today’s youth on the Internet, indigenous knowledge and indigenous media tend to get marginalized and undermined as legitimate and viable information sources. Given this inclination, it can be inferred that some students would instinctively choose the modern information source to get acquainted with and learn about the wide range of topics instantiated above.

The forces of globalization have severely eroded indigenous knowledge systems and practices, leading to what the UNDP (1996) aptly described as "rootless growth". This lack of social and cultural rootedness has far-reaching negative implications to ecological sustainability, community solidarity, and students’ contextualized learning. As a result of globalization's manifold *de-territorializing* effects, citizens experience alienation from their local communities and cultures. Socio-culturally and, by extension, socio-academically, they end up becoming more acquainted with and drawn to foreign perspectives, practices, and products that bear little or of no significance to community life. This detached and disengaged social existence continued to spread and perpetuate across many localities through the strong influence and broad reach of mainstream cultural institutions (i.e., media and the academe). In the process, it also

adversely impacted the dissemination, documentation and development of ethno-cultural heritage and ethno-epistemologies of many geographically disadvantaged, socially marginalized, and linguistically minoritized groups.

Indigenous Knowledge and Indigenous Media

In order to effectively promote indigenous knowledge and employ indigenous media, students need to first understand these social construct and media form clearly, coherently, and critically. As reflected in the textbook tasks, the subsequent entries itemize the various ways in which indigenous knowledge and indigenous media are depicted and represented by the authors, i.e., benefitting the communities (Liquigan 2016: 49), contributing to "social development" (Yuvienco 2017: 56, Alagaran 2019: 68), evolving in nature (Alagaran 2019: 68), being undermined and forgotten or "are dying" (Alagaran 2019: 68), needing preservation (Magpile 2016: 57, Alagaran 2019: 68), and acting as a countervailing force to "balance the influx of foreign ideas and ideologies" (Liquigan 2016: 113). Based on the foregoing representations, it can be argued that indigenous knowledge as a *cultural resource* is unquestionably socially beneficial and that it needs to be protected from the inroads of unabated globalization and homogenization. Contrary to the wrong notion that it is static, indigenous knowledge and media, in fact, continue to evolve and adopt to the changing cultural patterns and social circumstances.

With the objective of promoting and protecting indigenous knowledge through the application of MIL skills and competencies, the following tasks were interposed by the academic authors, i.e., video production featuring an interview with a resource person

from an indigenous community (Liquigan 2016: 53), documentation of indigenous knowledge for “future generations” (Yuvienco 2017: 55), dissemination of the documentation about indigenous knowledge through social media platforms (Yuvienco 2017: 56), and adoption of “mother tongue language” for a music video production (Cantor 2019: 281). Based on the foregoing list, the pedagogical interventions and initiatives in mainstreaming IKSP can then be summarized and categorized into the following: (1) cultural sensitivity in media production, (2) sustainable management of indigenous knowledge as well as (3) responsible adoption and promotion of indigenous language. However, using the critical tradition as frame of analysis, the above-cited endeavors fail to take into serious account the *material bases* of indigenous knowledge and indigenous media. Fundamentally, it can be argued that when the natural and physical ecologies get systematically plundered and the indigenous people are unjustly displaced from their ancestral land, the indigenous knowledge systems and practices become gravely compromised and imperiled as an inevitable consequence. As such, similar with how Campos’ (2016: 115) instantiated “land-grabbing, illegal mining, and the militarization of the home place” in his film analysis task, it is also important to expose the direct connection between *development aggression* and *ethnocide* (i.e., killing of culture) in the critical and contextual analysis of indigenous people-related social and sectoral issues.

Moreover, the continued digitalization of media and communication must not displace and spell an end to indigenous culture and indigenous media. Two approaches can be strategically employed to avoid this dreadful *cultural disaster*. Firstly, digital media can be instrumentalized to mainstream indigenous knowledge,

similar with the tasks above that encouraged the use of modern technologies in promoting indigenous knowledge systems and practices. Secondly, ethno-media (*communication channel*) can be effectively utilized to popularize IKSP (*communication message*). However, it must be underscored that the coherence and alignment of the indigenous message with the indigenous channel of the second strategy must only be complemented and not replaced by the proposed first approach.

Figure 6: Tasks about indigenous knowledge and indigenous media

Place-Based Knowledge

Then and now, places remain as *enduring wellsprings* and *repositories of knowledge*. In traditional societies, cave paintings which are essentially place-based

serve as representations and embodiments of ancient cultures, thereby effectively *capturing* and *cradling knowledge*. In the same vein, languages and other art forms also have strong socio-material bases that are tied closely to the place and its constitutive elements. As the term implies, place-based inquiry underscores the critical role performed by the place in the emergence, cradling, and development of not just *tacit knowledge* (indigenous) but also of its *explicit counterpart* (institutional). Even in the socio-historical study of media, the element of place remains indispensable. For instance, Campos (2016: 38) foregrounded Africa's writing system "being tied down to their locations and cultures" and, as such, he then asked the learners about the "implications on knowledge creation and circulation of having different writing systems situated in a particular place". This points to the fact that the place's *eco-cultural resources* play a salient part in defining and influencing the communication systems of its people and, therefore, such also has strong bearing to their social practice of *making sense* and *making use* of knowledge.

> *Since there was no printing yet and no way for words to travel far, how did particular places play a crucial role in cradling knowledge?* (Campos 2016: 38)

> *"The writing systems in Africa are different from those of the writing systems in Asia and Europe, and these systems are tied down to their locations and cultures. What do you think are the implications on knowledge creation and circulation of having different writing systems situated in particular places?"* (Campos 2016: 38)

By employing key informant interviews and focus group discussions with community elders in conducting media production and research, students are given the opportunity to develop a deeper bond with the elderly sector in the locality and thereby foster *intergenerational solidarity*. Any textbook task involving the senior citizens must also be

fully cognizant of the sector's heterogenous composition, i.e., being diverse in terms of income class, ethnicity, health status, employment, information access, and other pertinent social variables. Within this context, intergenerational solidarity must also involve what Giroux calls as the dialectical process of *border crossing*, especially if the students and the older generation in question belong to distinct socio-economic classes or cultural groups.

Local and Indigenous Language

Among the corpus of texts covered in this study, there were only very few tasks that afforded the students the option to write their outputs in *Filipino*. Aside from the need to increase its frequency and broaden the adoption, there is also a necessity to promote and mainstream other local languages and dialects in expressing their innermost thoughts and feelings.

> *Write these details (most memorable moment) in one to two short paragraphs. Use English or Filipino.* (Cantor 2019: 109)
>
> *Create an outline of the main points you want to share about your memorable moment. Use English or Filipino*. (Cantor 2019: 109)
>
> *Kung ikaw ay magsasagawa ng panimulang pananaliksik tungkol sa kahulugan at katangian ng iba't ibang anyo ng sining at disenyo, ano-ano ang mga hakbang na iyong dapat gawin? Isulat ang iyong sagot gamit ang hindi hihigit aa 100 salita.*
> (Yuvienco 2017: 28)

However, in order to enhance media and information literacy through *linguistic diversity*, the tasks should not be limited to the two instantiated languages only. More tasks must encourage the use of other local languages and dialects similar with Cantor's music video production. As "expression of self-determination" (*karapatan sa*

sariling pagpapasya), the use of local languages is an effective strategy in promoting local heritage and indigenous education (United Nations 2019). According to the United Nations (2019), indigenous languages are "not only methods of communication, but also extensive and complex systems of knowledge that are developed over the millennia", and are therefore by themselves *forms of knowledge*.

The pedagogical practice of allowing the use of Filipino and other local languages and dialects in producing and presenting the media outputs of students will enable media and information literacy to become a more effective platform in fulfilling the educational institution's curricular objectives (i.e., *academic*) and socio-civic missions (i.e., *more-than-academic*). With respect to the latter, especially in the case of the Philippines and other similarly situated nations, the central aim must be towards accomplishing its democratizing and empowering role in improving the lives of those who are income (i.e., substructure) and information (i.e., superstructure) poor. The task by Cantor (2019: 281) that requires the students to produce a music video with the use of a "local song with lyrics sung in Filipino or your mother tongue language" promotes creativity and contextuality. The flexibility afforded by the instruction may, in fact, motivate and embolden the students to adopt socially relevant songs (e.g., protest songs) written in their mother tongue for the MTV production requirement. If none is available, the leaners may instead consider translating progressive songs such as "*Buhay at Bukid*", "*Awit ng Pag-asa*" and "*Awit ng Proletaryo*" in their local language or dialect to fulfil both objectives of artistic presentation and social relevance.

Intercultural Dialogue

An essential media and information literacy competency that learners also need to cultivate is the skill in contextualizing MIL precepts and concepts in the socio-cultural milieu of their immediate localities, surrounding regions, and the wider global community. Paradigms, precepts, and concepts only make sense and become useful when provided with *contextual cultural application*. Enlightened understanding of global and local diversity is a crucial first step towards cross-cultural dialogue. In this sense, intercultural encounter contributes to what Murti (2009) envisioned as a process that will allow the learners to "grow as individuals and citizens of the world community". However, this is only possible if intercultural competence and cross-cultural communication form part of the textbook tasks and are applied in both local and transnational contexts.

Potential Pitfalls in Indigenous Media Education

Elder members from the rural communities have nurtured strong association with their natural ecologies and indigenous traditions (i.e., biocultural situatedness). This can be attributed to their deep connection with and memory of their *place*. Within this context, interview tasks that tackle indigenous knowledge should privilege the voice of the local folks and, as such, must form as the central element of the narrative. Without emphasizing this need to *re-center* their *ethno-stories*, the media production might only end up as another media material that is conventionally represented from the narrow frame of reference of community outsiders.

With the aim of introducing the learners to IKSP documentation, Yuvienco (2017: 53-53) encouraged them to explore the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction's "Recording and Using Indigenous Knowledge: A Manual". This is complemented by a viewing task of a documentary film featuring a *Yakan* elder preparing a betel nut concoction. This then is followed up by a question inquiring the learners about an indigenous knowledge in their respective localities or from their elderly relatives which they could document for the "future generation". Correspondingly, the subsequent task requiring the students to create an Instagram account where they can upload and compile the documented "indigenous knowledge material" necessitates free and prior informed consent (FPIC) and, in some instances, needs the approval from the *council of elders* (traditional) and the local government unit (institutional). While a manual was provided as a general guide, a clear and detailed FPIC reminder must also be included in the corresponding textbook task instruction. The same concern must likewise be raised in the succeeding task requiring the students to produce another indigenous knowledge documentation but in an audio format this time. As pointed out earlier, free and prior informed consent from an individual respondent may not be truly free because he/she may not be in an empowered position to decide on his/her own terms considering the unequal power relations at play between the academe and the local community. It is within this context that a collective indigenous body such as the *council of elders* is perceived to be in a better position to negotiate and decide on the consent request.

Critical Place-Based Consciousness

Central to critical place-based inquiry's social mission is challenging the neocolonial and repressive system of education and the vicious pattern of social asymmetries that it brings about and perpetuates. True to this pedagogy's activist stance, critical place-based inquiry also empowers the learners and local inhabitants in asserting their political agency as well as in forging solidarities to resist social oppression in all its forms. As such, there must be a conscious effort to *create* and *expand spaces* that are conducive to and facilitative of the process of *re-inhabiting, re-claiming,* and *re-invigorating* communities.

Two textbook tasks with themes and sub-themes that have strong association with the issues of *place, identity* and *power* are the case studies instantiated by Cantor (2019: 203 & 221) about *cultural appropriation*. Both case studies touched on the issues of cultural prejudice and ethnic stratification involving the Ethiopian masses and the precolonial Filipinos. In the first case study pertaining to the Crawford-Garcia prenuptial photo shoot in Ethiopia, the following social and sectoral issues were simultaneously covered: *cultural appropriation, ethnic discrimination,* and *class divide*. This case study is a commendable preliminary application of critical-place based inquiry as demonstrated by its (1) perceptive presentation of structural inequality as a social reality, (2) strong emphasis on the various but interconnected dimensions of human geography (i.e., cultural, political, economic), (3) critical interrogation of how technology was employed to marginalize specific sectoral interests, and (4) committed stance to surface silenced voices. In the same vein, the *brownface* controversy surrounding the fantasy series *Bagani* also features the elements of critical place-based inquiry in the

way the issue was represented as (1) a manifestation of ethnic stratification, (2) an application of critical cultural geography, (3) an illustration of media's propensity to "counter this issue or perpetuate it further" (Cantor 2019: 221), and (4) an opportunity to privilege muted voices.

> *With so many comparisons existing in a single frame (i.e., the rich-looking clothes vs. the not-so-affluent local clothing, the skin color, etc.), what kind of messaging do these types of photo say?* (Cantor 2019: 203)
>
> *Is there a rich-poor dichotomy being highlighted here, accidentally or on purpose? Discuss.* (Cantor 2019: 203)
>
> *Do you think that covers their "artistic license" to use brownface, given its historically racist implications? In the first place, why are we not seeing more brown skinned actors on local TV?* (Cantor 2019: 221)

Intersectionality of Social Exclusion

In her prelude in one of the textbook tasks on cultural appropriation, Cantor (2019: 203) described the passive stance of the local folks as mere background element in the promotional photograph, pointing out their "blurred or half-cropped" rendering vis-à-vis the foregrounded celebrity models in their aristocratic posture. The articulated relationship of the models (i.e., Filipino mestizo artists Billy Crawford and Coleen Garcia) to the local inhabitants (i.e., Ethiopian masses) is represented as *disproportionate* in many dimensions and levels. The latter were *othered* by virtue of their skin color, clothing, and class origin. In the other case study by the same author about rendering artists in *brownface*, the contentious issues of ethnic and cultural discrimination remain as the central point of debate. Although not explicitly pointed out, the specific case study featuring the Ethiopian masses and the multidimensionality of their marginalization suggests the *intersectionality of social exclusion* (Crenshaw 2017)

that they experience (i.e., subordination by virtue of their class, skin color, and culture, etc.).

Most textbook tasks that pertain to social inequities and inequalities fail to underscore the reality of intersectional social exclusion that is quite evident in many institutional and community contexts. This experience of multi-dimensional social exclusion put individuals and groups in an even more disadvantaged and vulnerable position. For instance, this can be manifested in the situation whereby a woman experiences marginalization and discrimination on the basis not only of her sex and gender but also of her socio-economic status, ethnicity, and educational background, i.e., a poor indigenous woman who was not able to enter formal schooling.

In foregrounding intersectional social exclusion, Yuvienco (2017: 26) cited anti-bias activist Clorama Dorvilias in relation to what constitute as "identity triggers", namely "weight, skin color, accent, gender, clothing, sexual orientation, disability, body language, ethnicity, attractiveness, and height". To this existing list, the '*name of a person'* which is usually being associated with one's nationality, faith, or social class could also be added. Drawing from this list of "identity triggers", intersectionality of social exclusion refers to the predicament of being linked to two or more social variables and being discriminated on the bases of the person's association with what are believed and perceived to be socially undesirable/disadvantageous traits.

While there were efforts to cover the various forms of prejudice and discrimination for analysis and intervention, there is an observable failure to coherently present the reality of the intersectionality of social exclusion in most of the textbook tasks. Aside from Yuvienco's reference to Dorvilias, it was only in the instantiations of Cantor (2019) and

Campos (2016) in some of their case studies and media text analyses about the marginalized that this social phenomenon was foregrounded and problematized.

Broadly speaking, intersectionality of social exclusion (Crenshaw 2017) refers to the *coinciding* and *compounding* conditions of social vulnerabilities. It is very uncommon that a disadvantaged individual or group is only discriminated based on a single factor. Intersectional social exclusion brings to the fore the experience of marginalization based on overlapping social variables, i.e., class, sex, gender, ethnicity, heritage, citizenship, education, age, ability, faith, geographical location, occupation, health outcome, and family status, among others. It can also be observed from the list the strong place-based underpinning of some of the specific variables. In the media text analysis by Campos (2016), for instance, his questions implied how geography is directly associated with poverty and the inefficient system of basic social service delivery (e.g., education, health, electricity) in the locality. This type of *situated* and *empathic learning* allows the students to reflect about the transportation-related problems normally identified with poor infrastructure, urban bias, and rural underdevelopment. In relation to the foregoing exposition, the questions below highlight the interanimating issues of spatial injustice, structural violence, and social exclusion.

> *The children who cannot afford to ride motorized boats to go to school have to walk on marsh and muddy paths along the river side. What does this indicate about social services available to the people in the rural areas?* (Campos 2016: 112)

> *There is no electricity in the community. How does this fact play a quiet but crucial role in the state of literacy of the people in the community?* (Campos 2016: 112)

> *What is the significance of showing the difficulty of Intoy's brother in journeying to school and back?* (Campos 2016: 112)

> *What is the significance of the scene where children play with boat toys? Does it add a deeper dimension to the personalities and the perceived aspirations of the children?* (Campos 2016: 112)

Critical Place-Oriented Media Text Analysis

Critical place-oriented documentary films about other cultures and communities allow the learners to become aware of what renders their social situatedness *similar* or *different* to the "world beyond" (Campos 2016). This media exposure also enables the students to reflect on their privileged social position contrary to the deplorable social condition of the characters being depicted in the featured films. Apart from this self-realization, place-oriented film analysis also promotes cross-cultural literacy and intercultural dialogue.

> *How does making/watching a documentary help you appreciate the world beyond your immediate social context?* (Campos 2016: 109).

One of the hallmarks of place-based inquiry is being able to "connect with the course content" by "anchoring the student investigation in the real world" (Langran & DeWitt 2020: 58). However, this too must be carried out in a thoughtful and calibrated process. Since skills in community-based engagement and research cannot be acquired and developed instantaneously, a *scaffolding technique* needs to be devised. Applicable textbook tasks towards this end are the place-oriented film analysis and other media text analysis similar with those instantiated by Campos (2016) and Cantor (2019). Media text analysis of this nature introduces the learners to the critical role of the place in the study of *social order* (statics) and *social change* (dynamics). It can then be

followed by media production tasks with corresponding guide questions (i.e., guided inquiry). The photography project instantiated by Cantor (2019) that involves various subjects, i.e., human as well as non-human elements, is an illustrative case of this *transition or bridging process*. Aside from the strong people-oriented and place-based attributes of the task, another essential component of this requirement is the self-reflective process of contemplating on the lessons learned from the actual media production experience. Certainly, the unique encounters with the "people, community, environment and other elements" considering their inherent contextual differences would also involve varying challenges, reactions, and hence reflections.

Place-Based Divide

Critical place-based pedagogy reveals and interrogates not only the *North-South gap* between the two global hemispheres but also the *urban-rural divide* that characterizes societies within a nation. In this lopsided affair, displacement and underdevelopment become recurring patterns of structural violence in the lives of people inhabiting the Global South and the rural regions. More particularly, such vicious cycle marks the life and struggle of the indigenous people in the Philippines. From the critical place-based perspective, the cultural identity of the indigenous people is believed to be strongly and inherently linked to their ancestral land (*lupang ninuno*). This historical and continuing pattern of physical and economic displacements (i.e., material dimension) has far-reaching and almost irreversible impact on indigenous people's identity and culture (i.e., non-material aspect). The following guide questions provided by Campos (2016: 108-109) for the media text analysis of the film '*Sa Rikaw'*

are valuable in establishing this *deep land-life connection* and in highlighting the vicious cycle of systemic violence that the indigenous people in the Philippines continue to experience and endure. Within this context, the role of case studies through documentary film analysis is very instrumental in the process of consciousness-raising and the social preparation for border-crossing.

> *Historically, where did Iraya Mangyan reside?* (Campos 2016: 108)
>
> *Why are the Iraya Mangyan afraid to go to town?* (Campos 2016: 108)
>
> *What are the possible reasons why the Iraya Mangyans no longer speak the Irayan language?* (Campos 2016: 108)

An examination of the socio-economic and socio-cultural realities in the country reveals that many regions remain to be characteristically rural and agrarian, and, given this development context, indigenous knowledge and indigenous media must continue to form part of the students' education, communication, and media praxis. However, textbook tasks and learning activities vary in terms of community, cultural, and sectoral representation. Some possess strong urban orientation and stereotypes while others manifest varying levels of depiction of the country's predominantly rural and underdeveloped character. It is notable that a task by Liquigan (2016) paid attention to the urban bias and Metro Manila-oriented reporting of traditional media for the students to critically examine and reflect on.

> *Recall your encounter with the following instances of media exposure and share in class your observations: the types/themes of news story headlines of a local broadsheet (e.g., Metro Manila-centric).* (Liquigan 2016: 55)

Campos (2016) also instantiated the urbanization process that is becoming the *social current* in many localities and then posed a question if "all the Philippine spaces" need to go through the same *hegemonic* and *homogenous* pattern. His question points to the importance of self-determined development that the rural people must decide *independently* and *collectively* (i.e., counter-current).

> *How do you see the Philippines in the future? Should all of the Philippine spaces head in the same direction of urbanization? How should rural peoples proceed along the track of progress?* (Campos 2016: 119)

In the series of film analysis required by Campos (2016), strong place-based orientation was observed to be consistently embodied in the following discursive themes and sub-themes:

1. ancestral land of the Iraya Mangyans (*Sa Rikaw*)
2. apprehensions of the Iraya Mangyans to go to the city center (*Sa Rikaw*)
3. indigenous leadership (*Sa Rikaw*)
4. knowledge of the indigenous language (*Sa Rikaw*)
5. loss of the indigenous language and its socio-cultural implications (*Sa Rikaw*)
6. preservation of the indigenous language (*Sa Rikaw*)
7. critical role of literacy in the community (*Ang Pasko ni Intoy*)
8. energy poverty in the community and its implications to the literacy level of the local inhabitants (*Ang Pasko ni Intoy*)
9. far distance between the community and the school in relation to the poor system of transportation (*Ang Pasko ni Intoy*)
10. "community and togetherness" as embodied among the "family and children working and playing together" (*Ang Pasko ni Intoy*)

11. “family and community dynamics” and the “positive value of work” they exude (*Ang Pasko ni Intoy*)

12. distinction of urban and rural ecologies (*Ugkat*)

13. problematization of development as a process (*Ugkat*)

14. problematization of urbanization and rural life (*Ugkat*)

15. visualization of city girl and Lumad girl (*Ugkat*)

Critical Place-based Sensitivity

A task that promotes both *critical self-awareness* and *other-awareness* is this one below by Campos (2016: 60). This reflection question allows the students to practice critical place-based sensitivity toward the local folks in the coastal villages. Central to this frame of analysis is understanding the wide social divide that characterizes the lives of the relatively well-off tourists and the economically marginalized groups in the locality. It also enables the students to reflect on their privileged position as *middle class* by examining their social practices as tourists and travelers. The social inequity gets even more glaring when resort operators displacing municipal and subsistence fisherfolks from their source of employment and livelihood is factored in and interrogated. The oblivious mindset of tourists can be compared to the dismissive attitude of consumers who are guilty of “commodity fetishism”, i.e., the tendency to disregard the exploitative social relations involved in the production of goods. In the specific case of local tourism, it is the reality of chronic poverty and the economic dislocation of the fisherfolks from their source of sustenance that are rendered invisible, unexamined, and unproblematized.

> *Do you think that vacationing by the sea is really "the life". Why does uploading on social media incline us toward writing such posts? Will the people who do not go to the beach for their vacation but actually live by the sea, such as fisherfolks, share your sentiment?* (Campos 2016: 60)

Place-Based Instructional Philosophy and Practice

As a counterpoint to the traditional pedagogy, place-based inquiry possesses the following attributes: "learner-centered, inquiry-based, intergenerational, community as classroom, cross-curricular, curriculum with context, and local to global context" (Liebtag 2019, Teton Sciences School 2021, Bhat 2016). Based on the textbook tasks that were analyzed, "learner-centered" and "inquiry-based" attributes manifested in community-oriented tasks where students are afforded varying levels of academic freedom and flexibility in the application of the lessons learned (e.g., Zarate 2016, Alagaran 2019, Liquigan 2016). The "intergenerational" character is embodied in the textbook tasks that required the learners to interview elder members of the family and community (e.g., Alagaran 2019, Yuvienco 2017). The "community as classroom" and "curriculum with context" are exemplified among the tasks wherein the local community and culture were instantiated as contexts of/for learning (e.g., Cantor 2019, Zarate 2016, Alagaran 2019). "Cross-curricular approach" is rendered in mini-tasks that intertwine media and information literacy with other subject areas in the senior high school curriculum (e.g., Yuvienco 2017, Magpile 2016). "Local to global context" is applied in the media text analyses involving cases and circumstances that operate in these two distinct geographical areas and socio-ecological levels of analysis (e.g., Campos 2016).

In accordance with critical media pedagogy, textbook tasks must provide learners with “discursive opportunities to integrate their own cultural and historical knowledge to interpret, evaluate, synthesize and create texts” (Orr 2006). This creative and contextualized outlook in learning challenges the *traditional deficit model* of teaching that reduces education to a top-down, unilinear, and monolithic process. Such empowering pedagogy is only possible if the textbook tasks *invoke* and *involve* the socio-cultural and socio-historical situatedness of the learners, including the internally displaced, economic migrants, and political refugees.

Place-Based and Youth-Oriented Perspectives

Critical place-based learning does not only afford the students to grapple with the social problems and thorny issues that confront their local communities but also contribute to their critical unraveling and sustainable resolution. As critical stakeholders, the youth is situated in a unique and enviable position to (1) apprehend the problem from a different and unique vantage point, (2) examine the issues in question employing the sustainability criteria, and (3) propose alternative modes of intervention and initiative. Towards this end, the role of the youth becomes indispensable in the intergenerational objective of upholding the shared values and aspirations of the community. This youth formation and mobilization then renders media and information literacy particularly useful in tapping and realizing the youth’s viable and valuable sectoral potential.

Students constitute as a distinct sector in the locality. Their *creative energies* and *critical faculties* can be optimized in building sustainable and resilient communities.

The youth-initiated and community-oriented projects that are prescribed in the textbook tasks can serve as a crucial first step in engendering the *Freirean pedagogy of hope and change*. Through critical place-based media pedagogy, the youth will learn early on to perceptively (1) apprehend their social situatedness (e.g., multiple positionalities), (2) confront unjust social structures (e.g., multiple systems of oppression), and, consequently, (3) envision and actualize alternative possibilities (e.g., multiplicity of preferred futures).

Civic Intentionality and the "Contingencies of Life"

Traditional education is mostly taking place inside the classroom but "great teachings as we know them today seemed to have occurred outside of it" (Segovia 2004). This assertion coherently aligns with the *public sphere pedagogy* and points to the pressing need to rethink orthodox educational philosophy and practice. Segovia (2004) also added that transformative and empowering education must be anchored on the "contingencies of life – i.e., what one is brought up to and from which one is supposed to learn and gain some control in the process". This so-called "contingencies of life" that is being alluded in Segovia's argument cannot be separated from the local community where the learners are integrally part of and engaged with. In order to make the learning experience democratic and inclusive, an 'other-oriented' media pedagogy must guide this process.

Accordingly, the interconnected roles of being a *human person,* a *learner,* a *local inhabitant,* and a *citizen-critic* can only be fulfilled within the context of a community in dynamic and dialectical interaction. By the same token, these social roles are mutually

defining in pursuing the objectives of personal development and the broader goal social transformation.

'Border Crossing' and Solidarity Building

Giroux's (1991 as cited in Kueker 2009) articulation of how power in the "metaphorical and literal sense" is *circumscribed* and *inscribed* "differently on the body, culture, history, space, land, and psyche" underscores the *multi-dimensionality* and *multi-contextuality* of power relations, particularly those involving class, ethnic, and gender politics. This is best illustrated in Cantor's case studies (2019: 202-203 & 220-221) about cultural appropriation and poverty pornography where power asymmetries are revealed to appear in various *material* and *non-material* dimensions and contexts (e.g., skin complexion, socio-economic status, spatial location, cultural artifact, etc.). Through border pedagogy, the "historically and socially constructed strengths and limitations of those place and borders which we inherit, and which frame our discourses and social relations" are revealed and rendered visible as well as subjected to thoroughgoing examination and transformation (Giroux 1991 as cited in Kueker 2009: 49). This assertion by Giroux runs consistent with how the *critical ethics of care* apprehends social contradictions in any given community considering its inherently complex, multi-faceted, and ever-changing social landscape, especially among localities which involve intense struggles over rights and resources. Along this line, the political act of border crossing will embolden the learners to reach the broader social expanse of the unfamiliar and render it as *place of connection, discovery,* and *engagement*.

Incidentally, this researcher is reminded of a co-learner in college who assumed that

being an indigenous person herself (i.e., an Ifugao from Northern Luzon) would not bring about any new discovery when immersing and integrating with a different indigenous group from another region (i.e., the Tagbanuas of Palawan) since they belong to the same sectoral group anyway (i.e., indigenous people). The complex process of "border crossing" made her ultimately realize that aside from the many similarities as fellow indigenous people, there are also remarkable differences. To a great extent, she learned about the Tagbanuas' politics, economy, and culture from her experience of extended and profound encounter with them, thereby bringing enormous benefit and opportunity in terms of learning, advocacy, and development work for both parties.

As such, solidarity work essentially must be conceived as a *process*. Process, within this parameter, is apprehended as a "give and take of lived experience", "structure-agency interaction", and "the working through of complex power relationship at play between academic and community" (Kueker 2009). This points to the fact that forging solidarity is *not* possible without the conscious effort to interpenetrate and understand each other's social world. In connection with this, border pedagogy then becomes instrumental in facilitating the "interaction between solidarity partners" (Giroux 1991 as cited in Kueker 2009). This engagement will provide an opportunity and pave the way for both sectoral groups to explore their commonalities in terms of *shared burdens, aspirations,* and *struggles*.

This solidarity with the marginalized, according to Dulay (2004), allows the students to "…become aware of their social location and the social space they occupy in the society which is what we call *punto de vista* – the window through which they *see, hear,*

feel, touch, and even *taste* the social reality". It is assumed therefore that the students' social awareness of others is only possible if there is critical understanding of their own social location in relation to other's social situatedness. Correspondingly, reading the word (text) and reading the world (context) necessitate the full activation of the learners' *sense perceptions* while also being conscious of how they can be *leveraged* by media and communication technologies.

Engaged and Estranged Positioning

Janks' (1997) notion of learners' "engaged-estranged" positioning vis-à-vis a specific text can also be associated with Giroux's pedagogy of "border crossing". If the narratives from the community are to be taken as the text in question (i.e., '*community as text*'), the dialectical application of engaged-estranged reading will allow the learners to gain "entry of the other" (i.e., *'engagement'*) and assert their "own positions" (i.e., *'estrangement'*) in the politico-communicative encounter (Janks 1997). Considering the dialectical nature of social relationships, this may lead to possible contradictions between the school and the community's positions on particular social and sectoral issues. However, learners who are involved in community engagement of this nature need to be prepared for these eventualities by being provided with guidelines (e.g., focus group discussion instructions and key informant interview protocols) in managing, synthesizing, and making sense of diverse opinions, interpretations, and standpoints.

“Dialogue of Life” and Dialectics of Life

Dulay (2004) refers to the encounter with the community as the “dialogue of life” where the learners engage with the community on “people’s terms”. In the context of the textbook as a “mediating tool”, it is through the textbook tasks that require community engagement where this “dialogue of life” can be potentially enacted and actualized. However, a ‘social totem pole’ appears to govern this school-community dynamics. Typically, the topic of choice and the set of procedures emanate from the academic side while the community members are seldomly consulted about these matters of critical concern to them. As such, at times, they end up as passive receivers or mere spectators. There is also the possibility of a potential clash between the assertion of the students’ “own terms” in relation to and as against the “people’s terms”. This legitimate concern can be dealt with by invoking (1) Mihailidis’ construct of *care* that seeks to establish connection and reciprocity as well as (2) Giroux’s *border crossing* that aims to foster relatedness and solidarity in apprehending and transcending differences. It goes without saying that media and information literacy as a field of study and practice requires *frequent, high level*, and *sustained encounter* not only with the *media content* (i.e., text) but also (or more so) with the *social world* (i.e., context).

Chapter VIII

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

"*Orwell feared that the true would be concealed from us.*
Huxley feared the truth would be drowned in a sea of irrelevance.
Orwell feared we would become captive culture.
Huxley feared we would become a trivial culture.
In 1984, people are controlled by inflicting pain.
In Brave New Word, they are controlled by inflicting pleasure.
In short, Orwell feared that what we hate will ruin us.
Huxley feared that what we love will ruin us."
(Neil Postman 1985)

Summary

Research Context

The socio-political context when this critical inquiry was conceived and pursued coincided with a raging global pandemic and an intense national electoral battle that are both characterized by massive disinformation and misinformation. All these on top of an economy that is rendered underdeveloped by decades of mal-governance and a political climate that is highly polarized due to intense social and economic contradictions. Both these global and national events (i.e., unsettling pandemic and dysfunctional elections) along with the continuing development challenges (i.e., economic, political, cultural, informational, and communicational in nature) are connected and complex forms of disruptions that will detrimentally define and influence the Filipinos' collective future. Within this context, the role of critical media and information literacy education is indispensable in empowering the vulnerable public –

especially the youth – in dealing with the destabilizing and disabling information, communication, and media pathologies. More than ever, it is in this "age of spectacle and distrust" (Mihailidis 2019) that the youth and the broader section of the Filipino population are in a desperate need to be equipped with critical and civic media literacy skills and competencies (Kellner and Share 2007, Mihailidis 2019) as viable *countermeasures* and *counterstrategies*.

Textbook continues to be a staple part of the educational experience of learners, appearing from pre-elementary years even up to graduate studies. However, the ubiquitous and default presence of textbooks in our academic ecology rendered these instructional resources taken for granted as subjects of critical examination. The commonplace nature of textbook and the high regard accorded to this pedagogical device leave many stakeholders uncritical of its conceptualization, adoption, and evaluation. This uncritical disposition is even more serious in the case of the often-ignored set of textbook tasks despite its crucial role in learning application and assessment.

Gaps, Issues, and Oversights

1. *Weak Integration of Theories*

In the examined textbook tasks, it has been observed that there are only limited attempts to *deliberately* connect theory to practice (i.e., not merely implied). In many instances, the tasks proceed right away with the application dimension without explicitly identifying first the theoretical underpinnings in question. Within this context, there is a

need to consciously identify the underlying principles and constructs within the tasks to purposely associate and relate the theory with the practice. While theoretical application is evident in some textbook tasks, there were however very limited attempts to *explicitly* identify and apply specific critical theories, except for Liquigan (2016: 27, 43) when he instantiated using *normative theories* in assessing Philippine media and '*propaganda theory*' for student reporting as well as Zarate (2016: 110) in her prescribed activities applying the '*public sphere model*' in apprehending the "relationship of the media industry to society". From the critical stance, textbook tasks and learning activities also need to develop the analytical skills of students in critiquing dominant media theories in terms of their *fundamental assumptions* and *contextual applications*. In addition, the superordinate causes of social and sectoral issues are seldom traced and identified because of the common tendency to focus on the subordinate factors or the symptomatic manifestations only of the social pathologies. In dealing with this *discursive* and *pedagogical gap*, critical theories therefore have a vital role to play, and this theoretical foregrounding must be categorical (i.e., explicit and direct).

2. *Failure to Go beyond Media Text Analysis*

Media and information literacy needs to instill among the learners the capacity to conduct media text analysis. Task of this kind has been consistently observed across all the seven textbook titles. However, the textbook task design must not predominantly center on media text analysis alone because learning should also involve community-based and civic-oriented applications. Context-oriented education, especially when locally situated, can potentially contribute to the heightened social consciousness and

civic engagement of students.

3. *Continued Adoption of Close-ended Question Types*

It must be realized that the users (Grades 11-12) of the instructional materials would have been first year and second year college students if not for the implementation of the new K-12 curriculum, hence the need to do away with questions of lower-order types. In some textbook tasks, for instance, these are manifested in traditional assessment forms such as identification, matching type, crossword, and true or false test. There are also complex social and sectoral issues which could have been accorded the opportunity to be discussed, deliberated, and debated on by the students to better facilitate active, transformative, and critical learning. In effect, this oversight compromises the potential of media and information literacy as an empowering and transformative *course* and *discourse*. Such also becomes the limitation when the pedagogical focus is mainly on the technological, technical, and artistic aspects of media literacy education, especially on topics and subtopics dealing with textual, visual, audio, motion, and multimedia information.

4. *Failure to Go beyond the Campus Context*

In some of the textbook tasks, the instantiated contexts are mainly in the class and campus settings. Context-oriented learning can be more effectively achieved through the students' active engagement beyond the campus such as the instantiated civic-intentioned tasks as well as the community-based media productions. These expansive and immersive strategies, however, must be rendered in a more participatory,

integrative, and coherent manner that will engage the community interlocutors from planning to evaluation stage.

5. *Neoliberal Imprints*

In varying degrees, the neoliberal framework that governs the affairs of business, media, and education manifests its influence and impact throughout the processes of textbook conceptualization, production, and distribution. In some of the textbook task conceptualization, for instance, these are expressed in the uncritical adoption and application of the concepts such as market, target market, marketability, unique selling proposition, and global competitiveness that are foregrounded within the parameter of business promotion and development. This influence is also demonstrated in the interposition of role assignments associated with private and commercial enterprise.

6. *Need for Action and Activation*

Most textbook tasks are rendered in the form of reflection questions, media text analyses, media productions, and the open-ended question types. However, there are only very limited community-oriented tasks that involve civic action and advocacy work. Mihailidis (2019) envisions media literacy interventions and initiatives to "recenter their practices around turning knowledge into action". The knowledge that is learned and produced in school or through the school and community interactions must be employed towards useful social ends with *local applications*.

Through the textbook tasks, the learners need to be introduced to the pedagogical praxis of employing media and technology with the community's best interest and well-

being in mind. Media literacy education must also be envisioned as *issue-oriented* and *solution-driven*. Towards this end, media and information literacy should contribute to the objectives of developing the knowledge (know-what) and competencies (know-how) of the students in (1) conducting issue analyses, (2) taking principled positions, and (3) formulating sustainable solutions. Along this line, the constructs of "agency, care, critical consciousness, persistence, and emancipation" must be consistently and co-constitutively incorporated, activated, and applied in media and civic action.

Prospects and Potentials

1. *Authors as Social Catalyzers and Enablers*

Authors act as *transmitters of knowledge* when they compose the main text of the textbook as instructional resource. However, when they formulate and design the textbook tasks, they serve as *catalyzers of social action* through the learning activities that the students must respond to and act upon. This is especially the case when the textbook tasks possess the praxis-oriented and civic-intentioned attributes that go beyond the structure and stricture of traditional ivory tower pedagogy.

2. *Diversity and Complexity*

As a "zone of transaction" (Genette 1997), textbook tasks need to provide the students with a diverse learning encounter and experience. The application of media and information literacy in varied contexts broadens and enriches learning. In this regard, authors who employ different media platforms and provide diverse contexts of

application are worthy of note. Diverse though this existing set of tasks maybe, the textbook authors and classroom educators, however, should not stop from continuously discovering pioneering and progressive pedagogical approaches and techniques.

3. *Critical Media Literacy*

Textbook tasks framed along the critical media literacy approach instantiate cases and contexts that reveal how media is strategically linked to the centers of economic, political, and cultural power. Compellingly, Zarate (2016), Campos (2016) and Cantor's (2019) prescribed tasks were observed to possess this pedagogical attribute given the strong and consistent adoption of the critical frameworks of *political economy, cultural politics,* and *human rights* in their textbook task design, respectively.

4. *Progressive Potential*

By employing critical discourse analysis, the researcher was able to "uncover unstated assumptions and presuppositions that are encoded covertly in institutional and media language" (Bonvillain 2008). As communicative behaviors, the acts of providing directives, instantiating hypothetical or actual cases, and asking questions form part of the default social practices within the institutional context of academic publishing. Under a hegemonic arrangement, the discursive biases that are embedded in textbook tasks through these communicative behaviors are made to appear as normal, natural, and hence legitimate and unquestionable elements in the instructional materials. Nonetheless, the study also revealed that there are patterns in the textbook task design that sharply diverge from the conventional discursive focus, and among which are

(1) Cantor's (2019) introduction of the 'intersectionality of social exclusion' in her case studies thereby exposing social injustice in its varied forms, (2) Campos' (2016) critico-philosophical inquiries on positionalities and intentionalities in his self-reflection tasks thereby sharpening the students' analytical and evaluative skills, and (3) Zarate's (2016) unmasking of the profit agenda of the market model in her incisive exercises thereby revealing the moral depravity of the capitalist logic.

Underscoring the importance of *critical media consumption*, Alagaran (2013) pointed out that training students to become responsible media consumers must not be downplayed because in producing media content they also draw their "ideas, perceptions, opinions and insights" from already existing media texts. Consistent with the notion of Milan's (2019) "freedom from", Alagaran also emphasized the need to be "critical and discriminating media consumers" by refraining from emulating conventional media that are promotive of "highly-commercialized" culture and those that are serving as purveyors of "distorted values".

Given the conservative arrangement under the prevailing social order, the broad and popular appeal of the textbook market still dictates the norm in mainstream instructional materials development. However, as *sites of struggle* (Apple 2000) and *zones of transaction* (Genette 1997), it was revealed in this communication inquiry that apart from the conventional set of practices textbook tasks also alternatively demonstrated and embodied critical praxis albeit in varying degrees.

Conclusion

Within the parameter of this critical communication research, the unit of analysis covers the instantiated social and sectoral issues in relation to the interposed pedagogical interventions and initiatives. Along this line, it is the objective of this study to surface the *exemplary tasks* that embodied the critical and creative interlinking of the cases and contexts with the interventions and initiatives. By using critical thematic analysis, the research was able to extract, code, and interpret the qualitative data according to the (1) development issues instantiated, (2) discursive strategies employed, (3) counter-discourses presented, and (4) pedagogical counter-imperatives interposed.

Based on this discursive examination, the mediation and instantiation for analyses and interventions of social and sectoral issues can then be generally classified into the following dialectical categories, namely: (1) *orthodox or critical* where the distinction centers on the capacity of the textbook tasks to expose unequal power relations, (2) *individual or collective* wherein the difference lies on where to appropriately situate the responsibility of tackling the socio-sectoral issues, (3) *isolated or intersectional* where the contrast is based on the multidimensional apprehension of the complex development issue in question, (4) *personal or structural* where the divergence is grounded on whether the root causes of the issue under scrutiny are associated with the micro or macro factors, and (5) *academic or more-than-academic* where the departure lies on the integration or non-integration of the social justice praxis.

In the context-based exercises, the students were observed to be socially positioned in various roles that can be categorized to be falling within the *private* and *public realms*.

The role instantiations in the private setting have a recurring *business theme* while those in the public sector are for the most part *un-politicized*, thereby lacking the necessary elements and sufficient degree of complexities and contradictions that characterize the development ecology/ecologies.

The conceptualization and production of the textbook tasks must be apprehended as a process that is shaped by a confluence of factors, namely (1) the ideological orientation and pedagogical framework of the academic authors, (2) the powerful influence of the business, education, and media institutions as well as (3) the development and policy realities that surround the cases and contexts instantiated for analysis in the learning activities.

Conclusively, the elements of the trifocal meta-attributes of civic intentionality, critical place-based inquiry, and critical praxis have been exemplified and embodied in many textbook tasks such as media text analysis, media production, and community-oriented media literacy initiatives; however, this has been observed in varying coverage and degrees only. Nonetheless, it is already a step in the right direction towards the development of a *textbook task culture* that is transformative (*makapagpanibagong-hubog*), empowering (*nakakapagsakapangyarihan*), and liberating (*mapagpalaya*).

In this politico-communicative inquiry, the discursive and pedagogical counter-imperatives are revealed to be *mutually defining* and *reinforcing* in carrying out the roles of media and information literacy in fostering *critical imagination*, *civic engagement*, and *collective action* among the learners.

Discursive Counter-imperatives

By adopting a critical discursive lens in examining textbook tasks, the *text in its dialectical context* becomes the central subject of analysis in interrogating underlying messages and meanings. As a critical reflective approach, this alternative textbook framework aids in unpacking and problematizing how the discourses on power, ideology, ethics, gender, ethnicity, violence, and poverty are constituted, expressed, concealed, taught, normalized, omitted, or resisted in the textbook tasks.

Despite the ideological and academic orthodoxies in the education system in general, the textbook task section as revealed by this study can also *alternatively* serve as a critical platform to articulate *counter-consciousness* and *counter-discourses*. When conceptualized and designed along this counter-tradition, the textbook task segment becomes a venue for learners to critically apply media and information literacy in sharpening their *scholarship* and *politics*. In summary, among the discursive counter-imperatives that surfaced in the foregoing analysis that were presented and examined in Chapters 4, 5 and 7 are as follows:

- ***Discourse on collective responsibility*.** By apprehending the pitfalls of individual responsibility in relation to the potentials of collective responsibility, students will be able to realize that personal effort (i.e., self-regulation and self-protection) is only a *necessary* but not a *sufficient condition/element* in dealing with media-related social and sectoral pathologies (e.g., disinformation and misinformation) because, more compellingly, it requires structural interventions and sustainable solutions (i.e., synergy of critical media pedagogy, government

regulation, media policy reform, and corporate accountability, among others).

- ***Discourse on critical accountability*.** By holding the powers-that-be responsible and accountable, learners will be able to apprehend that social and sectoral problems (e.g., 'information obesity') have deep *structural origin* which can be linked to the (1) excesses of big businesses, (2) negligence of public regulatory agencies, and (3) cover-ups by publicists – consistent with how critical journalist Michael Pollan (2008) perceived this same unholy alliance operates in the mainstream food industry.

- ***Discourse on intersectional social exclusion*.** By revealing the intersectionality of social exclusion (Crenshaw 2017) in a highly stratified society, students will realize that that the socially disadvantaged have, in fact, *multiple vulnerabilities* such that the *information poor* are those who are also economically, geographically, politically, culturally, communicationally, and technologically marginalized.

- ***Discourse on poverty and inequality situatedness*.** By situating social and sectoral issues in the context of poverty and inequality, learners will understand how development and policy challenges such as bureaucratic corruption, civil strife, system-induced disaster, triple burden of disease, and unsustainable migration are linked to the twin scourge of *resource deprivation* and *resource divide*. Along this line, social and sectorial issues must be apprehended with

poverty and inequality as default elements in the social equation. As such, civil strife must be understood to have been *caused* by poverty and inequality in the same way that it must also be recognized that civil strife can, in turn, *exacerbate* the level of poverty and inequality in the society. In this sense, poverty, therefore, must be recognized as a *structural failure* rather than a mere issue of individual shortcoming.

- ***Discourse on interlocking structural problems.*** By making critical sense of the *interlocking* social and sectoral debates, the students will recognize how a particular development issue such as corruption is connected to other political, policy, legal, constitutional, administrative, and ethical debates. This presupposes, therefore, that the proposed solutions also need to be comprehensive and integrated in character.

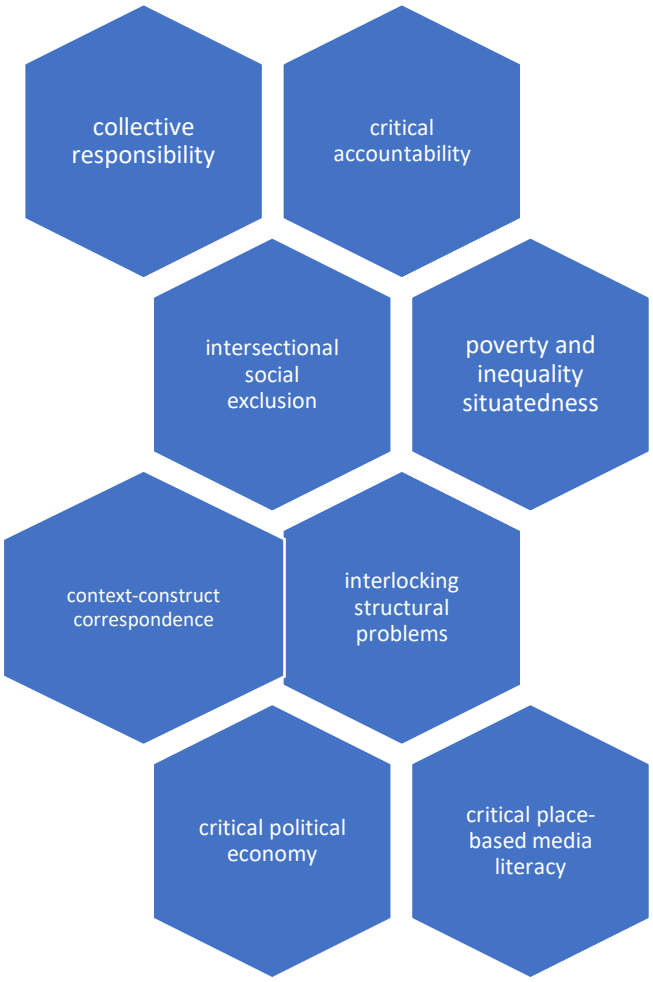
- ***Discourse on context-construct correspondence.*** By apprehending the *correspondence* of development issues in news media with the social and sociological construct from various disciplines, learners will be able to acknowledge how such *complementation* can (1) provide context to the concept as well as (2) provide conceptual analysis to the contextual issues.

- ***Discourse on critical political economy.*** By exposing the *profit motive* and *elite conspiracy* in the media business, critical political economy enables the students to be cognizant of (1) how the *people* (social) and the *planet*

(ecological) are conceived as *peripheral* and *secondary* when pitted against the financial bottom line (*profit*) and (2) how the public resources are methodically siphoned off for *private gain* and *self-aggrandizement*.

- ***Discourse on critical place-based media literacy.*** By cultivating critical place-based consciousness (Langran & DeWitt 2020) in/through media education, learners will gain awareness about (1) how *placelessness* has undermined *community ethics* and *vitality* and (2) how place sensitivity can *link the curriculum with the community* to establish and strengthen *interlocal*, *intergenerational*, and *intersectoral* knowledge creation and sharing (i.e., *knowledge from below and from within*).

Figure 7: Discursive counter-imperatives



Pedagogical Counter-imperatives

Discourse analyst Kozakowska (2010) asserted that it is not enough to mainstream media education content in formal instructions because there is also a pressing need to consciously "design a sufficiently critical pedagogy to implement it". Consistent with this assertion and based on the corpus of textbook tasks that served as this social

inquiry's subject of analysis, the following mutually reinforcing *critical pedagogies* were identified, documented, and examined.

Pedagogy of critical reflexivity

The *pedagogy of critical self-reflectivity* (or self-reflexivity) promotes the active process of examining one's positionality and intentionality in relation to his/her media production and consumption habit. Likewise, it helps individuals to make critical sense of how these personal and social circumstances define and influence their overall media experience. This involves seriously reflecting on one's social milieu, personal capacity, and even individual limitation. The critical dimension of self-reflectivity is demonstrated when it is employed in apprehending how one's *social position* and *disposition* is similar with (or different from) the marginalized and then making sense of how these qualities can serve as starting points in grappling with social differences, forging critical solidarity, and mobilizing their ranks into political action.

However, the term 'reflexivity' itself must also be problematized. Communication scholar van Ruler (2018) prefers to use the term *reflectivity* as a conscious act instead of reflexivity because of the "psychological and behavioral connotation" of the latter, which "suggests a rather routine action of reflex". Professor Emeritus van Ruler (2018) also added that "reflexive is more of a state whereas reflective refers to an on-going process".

Pedagogy of critical potentiality

The *pedagogy of critical potentiality* also necessitates self-understanding to identify,

map, and interrogate one's interests and inclinations. Within this context, the opportunity for *self-discovery* afforded by critical media education contributes to the process of bringing out the students' latent qualities and abilities. Consistent with the critical tradition, these promising attributes by the learners can be mobilized in (1) performing community-oriented tasks, (2) carrying out social advocacies for the disadvantaged, and (3) choosing a future career and profession along the same *socially committed path*. In ensuring student engagement and in realizing these human potentialities, the learning activities need to coherently incite *interest, excitement, hope, vigilance,* and the *ethics of care* among the students in both capacities as scholars and citizen-critics.

Pedagogy of critical creativity

The *pedagogy of critical creativity* integrates the attributes of *criticality* and *creativity* in fulfilling the objective of alterative media to produce *progressive content* with *strong aesthetic form* (Atton 2001 as cited in Zarate 2016). Invoking the *discourse of suspicion*, critical creativity is a necessary element in bringing about *alternative visions* and *narratives* that will challenge the mainstream conceptions and renderings that dominate the culture industry.

Pedagogy of critical history

The *pedagogy of critical history* provides the learners with the *chronological* and *thematic contexts* of the past to make sense of and grapple with the present condition and the prospective future. As such, a critical apprehension of the problematic present

must bring us to the critical study of the past. Pointing this out, Goswami, et al. (2014) set it straight that "critical history therefore is in the first instance history that is based on a moral and political standpoint in the present, on a reasoned dissatisfaction with life as it is currently lived and an attempt to reflect on that dissatisfaction by means of historical investigation". By critically historicizing the development of media, learners will be able to apprehend how the powerful economic, political, and cultural forces shaped and dominated the present configuration of media structures, models, and processes.

Pedagogy of critical interdisciplinarity

The *pedagogy of critical interdisciplinarity* is crucial in enabling the learners to achieve holistic and perceptive understanding of complex social phenomena. Through critical interdisciplinary approach in media literacy education, the social and sectoral issues associated with the thematic or dimensional focus of other subject areas can also be instantiated as possible *topics for analysis* and *areas of intervention* (e.g., gender-disaggregated disaster data analysis for DRRR, political analysis of election information-seeking behavior for Understanding Culture, Society and Politics). Ultimately, it is when various forms of knowledge become transcending in the *epistemological, disciplinal, a*nd *practical* sense that they truly become mutually defining and reinforcing.

Pedagogy of critical emotion

The *pedagogy of critical emotion* is central in enabling the learners to understand that various media contents can give rise to a range of emotion and vice versa, and that

developing emotional competence is important with respect to media production and reception. The *psycho-emotional dimension* of studying media and information literacy is seldom given sufficient focus considering the strong *socio-cognitive bent* of the field. Based on this research, the efforts to mainstream the emotional dimension include student tasks dealing with the emotions of envy, depression, hope, care, fear, anger, and empathy that are associated with the (1) exposure to social networking sites, (2) reception of public service announcements, and (3) extension of sympathy to human rights victims, among others.

Pedagogy of critical contextualization

Adopting the *pedagogy of critical contextualization* makes the learning experience of students meaningful, situated, and sensible. When learners are trained how to *localize*, they will be able to ground poverty, for instance, in its various dimensions, i.e., lowland poverty, coastal poverty, upland poverty, rural poverty, urban poverty, food poverty, fuel poverty, water poverty, income poverty, spatial poverty, time poverty, and psychological poverty, among others. By situating learning in multiple contexts, students will also be able to better analyze the different *levels of analysis* of the specific social and sectoral issues under scrutiny, i.e., personal, local, national, regional, global.

Pedagogy of critical solidarity

In a nation that is beset with complex development challenges and policy issues, the *pedagogy of critical solidarity* serves as a viable approach in consolidating diverse sectoral groups in united vision and action. If community mobilization, for instance, is to

be based on common and unifying principles, it must be anchored on *public values* that the people collectively hold dear and are determined to assert and defend. As correctly pointed out by philosopher Deborah Cook (2001), "ersatz solidarity now substitutes for the more authentic community of shared needs and interests" and, through *critical solidarity* (Kellner & Share 2007) and *collective reflective action* (McLaren & Crawford 2010), this flawed pattern of false and fleeting unity will be exposed, challenged, and transformed.

Synergy of Discursive and Pedagogical Counter-imperatives

In advancing the discursive counter-imperatives of (1) collective responsibility, (2) critical accountability, (3) intersectional social exclusion, (4) poverty and inequality situatedness, (5) interlocking structural problems, (6) context-construct correspondence, (7) critical political economy, and (8) critical place-based media literacy, the counterpart and mutually reinforcing pedagogical counter-imperatives are demonstrated to be *integral* and *indispensable.*

Critical self-reflectivity, critical potentiality, and critical emotion in relation to critical political economy will enable the learners to profoundly examine themselves and use the *process* and *product* of this introspection to achieve critical praxis. The critical apprehension of one's social position and potential is crucial in the process of challenging and dismantling the hegemonic social structures and arrangements.

Critical creativity and critical interdisciplinarity in relation to context-construct correspondence and interlocking structural problems will afford the learners to produce socially relevant media outputs *from/with* multidimensional perspectives. This is only

possible by critically making sense of the social and sectoral issues employing various concepts and constructs from different fields of inquiry.

Critical history and critical contextualization in relation to poverty and inequality situatedness, intersectional social exclusion, and critical place-based media literacy will allow the learners to perceptively *ground* and *situate* their analysis of and intervention to social and sectoral issues. The socio-historical context when and where the situation took place will enable the learners to understand the superordinate factors that undergird the social and sectoral issues as well as the *complex web of relationships and hierarchies* that govern the political terrain.

Lastly, critical solidarity in relation to collective responsibility and critical accountability will empower the learners to actualize the potential of collective action as a workable strategy in achieving political efficacy and in pursuing thoroughgoing social change (i.e., change of circumstances).

Table 11: Synergy of pedagogical and discursive counter-imperatives

Pedagogical counter-imperatives	Synergy	Discursive counter-imperatives
Critical self-reflexivity, critical potentiality, and critical emotion	Enable the students to profoundly examine themselves and use the process and product of this introspection to achieve critical praxis	Critical accountability, Critical political economy
Critical creativity and critical interdisciplinarity	Afford the learners to produce socially relevant media outputs from/with multidimensional perspectives	Context-construct correspondence
Critical history and critical contextuality	Allow the students to perceptively ground and situate their analysis of and intervention to social and sectoral issues	Power and inequality situatedness, Interlocking structural problems, Critical place-based media literacy
Critical solidarity	Empowers the learners to actualize the potential of collective action as a workable strategy in achieving political efficacy and pursuing thoroughgoing social change	Collective responsibility

Parallel Strategy and Critical Synergy

In the specific context of textbook tasks in chapters dealing with textual, visual, audio, motion, and multimedia information, it can be argued that the failure of instantiating socio-sectoral problems whether as foreground or background issues forego the opportunity of problematizing and making politico-critical sense of the technological and technical dimensions of media and communication. In Anderson-Bakken, Jegstad, and Bakken study (2020), it was discovered that in the chapters of the natural science textbooks where socio-scientific issues were instantiated, the corresponding textbook authors were observed to employ open-ended divergent questions that are promotive of higher order thinking skills and abilities.

In order to be relevant, impactful, and transformative in the discursive and pedagogical sense, textbook tasks must not only cover social and sectoral issues as topics but also strategically employ sociological perspectives and learning modalities that will promote contextual application, deliberative dialogue, and critical inquiry. To steer clear of the passive and parochial tendencies of mainstream media education, academic authors need to acknowledge first and foremost the potential of textbooks as *politico-communicative* instruments of "critical, relational, democratic, and visionary literacies" (North 2009) or what can be collectively referred as "more-than-academic" education.

In the teaching-learning praxis, alternative discourses cannot be engendered and concretized without the adoption of counterpart critical pedagogies. The critical appreciation and comprehension of alternative discourses only becomes possible when

articulated and reinforced employing non-traditional pedagogical approaches. This *parallel strategy* (or *critical synergy*) allows critical media education to be consistent and coherent both in terms of its discursive (content) and pedagogical rendering (structure).

Based on this social inquiry, textbook authors were able to instantiate diverse social and sectoral issues for analysis as well as interpose a wide range of courses of action for adoption by the learners. The conceptualization and formulation of tasks, however, varied in terms of *breath, depth, innovativeness, interconnection, situatedness,* and *criticality*.

Discursive Strategies

Doyle (1983 as cited in Anderson-Bakken, Jegstad, & Bakken 2020) argued that textbook tasks shape the learning process of the students by (1) "directing their attention" to the specific substantive dimensions of the lesson and (2) "specifying ways of processing information" in performing the research requirements and context-based exercises. Based on how the authors frame their textbook tasks through various discursive techniques, they then are also able to condition and shape how the learners should "think, act, and reason" (Anderson-Bakken, Jegstad, & Bakken 2020).

A discursive strategy is both *intentional* and *methodical*, aimed at fulfilling the authors' politico-communicative objectives. It becomes even more purposive when the set of discursive strategies is employed for a textbook task that functions inherently as a didactic form of media. Based on this critical qualitative research, among the discursive strategies that were mainly adopted by the textbook authors include (1) binary opposition, (2) omission/exclusion, (3) double legitimization, (4) dialectical positioning,

and (5) popular in form and social in rendering.

Binary opposition

Binary opposition is mainly employed to identify, dichotomize, and examine patterns of *superiority* (e.g., traditional vs. modern technologies), *impact* (e.g., traditional vs. modern modes of learning), *representation* (e.g., city dweller vs. rural dweller), *rendering* (e.g., incidental vs. intentional), and *implication* (e.g., mainstream vs alternative media), among others.

Omission or Exclusion

Omission strategy is observed when pressing and hot-button issues are excluded in the lineup of instantiated points of debate, topics of media production, or backdrops of context-based exercises in the textbook tasks, thereby creating and perpetuating wrong notions of the problem's *non-existence*, *non-importance,* or *non-urgency*. This discursive strategy can also be interpreted as a reflection of the author's (1) valuation of the degree of importance and urgency of the social and sectoral issue in question, (2) political stance on matters of public and collective interest, and/or (3) perception about the students' social readiness and political maturity to grapple and deal with complex and sensitive development issues.

Double legitimization

Double legitimization within the context of this research refers to the *complementarity* of the textbook authors' legitimacy born out of their qualification as scholars,

researchers, and practitioners in relation to another individual/organization's authority who/which they cite and invoke as source of supplementary texts in the textbook tasks and learning activities.

Dialectical positioning

Dialectical positioning as a discursive strategy enables the learners to locate themselves in the *social schema,* thereby making them realize that they are not merely passive and detached entities. Specifically, it will allow them to internalize that they, in fact, can affect and are also in turn affected by other individuals and groups surrounding them and that, ultimately, they can act upon these *dialectical encounters* with *political resolve, efficacy,* and *agency*.

Popular in Form and Social in Rendering

Lastly, the *popular in form and social in rendering* can be considered as an innovative strategy that seeks to appeal to the social sensibilities of the youth by mainstreaming development discourses and social advocacies through the interposition of popular and contemporary formats and styles.

Depending on the intent and purpose, each of the five discursive strategies contributes to either the reproduction of or resistance to the dominant media education perspectives and practices by (1) *dichotomizing*, (2) *de-emphasizing*, (3) *complementing*, (4) *positioning*, and (5) *popularizing* specific dimensions and

elements of social realities.

Politico-ideological Rendering

Words when used in a specific context provide them with “social and symbolic content” that convey meanings and “forms a coherent cultural system” (Bonvillain 2008). As a whole, this set of words results to “a unity of the verbally constituted consciousness” (Volosinov 1973 as cited in Bonvillain 2008). However, this level of coherence may differ in varying degrees within a particular textbook and across the seven textbook titles considering the converging and diverging curricular ideologies, discursive strategies, and pedagogical values of the academic authors. This is also demonstrated in the varying levels of inclination by the authors to deviate from the conventional nature of didactic media and accommodate alternative ideological, discursive, and pedagogical positions. For instance, Magpile (2016) and Liquigan (2016) reflect the pluralist orientation as evidenced by the varied role assignments to students that represent both private and public agenda. Zarate (2016) and Campos (2016) represent the progressive tradition as manifested by the conceptualization of textbook tasks along the critical frame of analysis (i.e., political economy). Alagaran (2019) displays consistent alignment with the media literacy movement approach as revealed by his diversified tasks that need to employ various media and information literacy skills and competencies. Yuvienco (2017) straddles between the media arts education and media literacy movement approaches as shown by the tasks that require the demonstration of both aesthetic rendering and MIL composite skills set. Fusing both approaches of critical media literacy and media literacy movement, Cantor (2019)

consistently demonstrated strong gender ethics and human rights perspectives as embodied in her instantiated media text analyses that center on issues about discrimination, exploitation, and marginalization as well as media production tasks employing various media platforms.

Authors' Relative Autonomy

Given the strategic positioning of some textbook tasks in challenging hegemonies and orthodoxies, it can be argued then that the textbook authors despite being part of the commercial textbook industry also exercise varying levels of "relative autonomy" in conceptualizing and formulating *counter-cultural knowledge products*. This analysis is based on Althusser's fundamental premise that the superstructure (i.e., socio-political, socio-cultural, and ethico-moral dimensions) can exert and assert *relative freedom* from the substructure (i.e., economic base), and can, in fact, act *reciprocally* and even *dialectically*. In the context of the textbook ecology, this *relative independence* can be observed in varying extent based on how critical scholarship, politics, and ethics are inscribed and imbricated in the instructional and assessment instruments such as textbooks and the constitutive student tasks. However, it can be argued that this relative independence can also be a *politico-ideological trap*, to wit:

> *This autonomy and ethos of neutrality served the capitalist order all the more effectively…producing an illusion of separate interests, while in reality masking the consensus or unity in regard to those fundamentally capitalist elements of the existing social order, which must at all costs, be protected, secured, and reproduced* (McRobbie 2005).

In order to entirely remove this ideological and political baggage, textbook authors must assume a consistently progressive stance against foreign influence

(i.e., nationalism) and elite control (i.e., democracy). Such politico-communicative positioning must manifest coherently in the textbook's main texts as well as the textbook tasks in both *discursive* and *pedagogical* terms.

Subjectivities and Pluralities

Etymologically, the term "text" came from the Latin word "textus" which means "tissue" or "woven". Subscribing to Barthes, scholars Branston and Stafford (2010) reiterated that "narrative texts were not one thing but a weaving together of different strands and processes", some being "internal to the story, others make connections to its outside". This is most certainly the case with reference to textbook task conceptualization, which is also an interweaving of diverse discourses, with attributes that are *internal* and *external* to the social practice and that may turn out also as *consistent* or *inconsistent* with each other.

As a system of categorization, it can be invoked that *genre* possesses both the characters of *conservativeness* and *creativity* because of being "relatively stable and at the same time open to change" (Wang 2006: 65). This attribute can also be considered innate to any textbook given its traditionally broad coverage in terms of themes and sub-themes. In addition, it can also be brought about by (1) the specific writer's pluralist standpoint that is evident and embodied in his/her individual authorship and discursive practice as well as the (2) the different perspectives and approaches of the writers that manifest across the textbook titles. Ultimately, these *hybridities* and *subjectivities* that the academic authors embody and exemplify in the prescribed textbook tasks cannot be divorced from their (1) intellectual history, (2) ideological influence, (3) pedagogical

orientation, and (4) broader social milieu.

Texts and Values in Transitions

Janks (1997) forwarded that "most texts are hybrids which draw on more than one discourse". After deliberate analysis, this has also been observed to be the case among some of the textbook tasks. Janks (1997) further argued that the hybridity of texts "provides evidence for values in transition" and this process reflects "*the tenacity of existing discourses at work in society and the struggle of alternative discourses to emerge*". This would explain why some textbook authors would display the tendency to possess multiple but at times contradictory and inconsistent discourses and standpoints (e.g., conformist vs. transgressive stance, individualist vs. collectivist orientation). Janks (1997) added that the "textual instantiations capture the clash of discourses and demonstrate ideological forces at work to produce a different hegemony" or, *alternatively* and more *appropriately*, counter-hegemony (*kontra-gahum*). Drawing on Berger's (1990) typology of genre norms (i.e., norm declaration, norm incorporation, functional norm constitution, and revolutionary norm constitution), it can be inferred that the observable shifting patterns and this so-called "transition in values" fall under the functional norm constitution. In this phase, the discourse community in question is gradually recognizing the limitations and drawbacks of the current order, and hence the progressive emergence of the discursive and pedagogical counter-imperatives as demonstrated this study.

Varying Structural and Institutional Contexts

Given their diverse positionalities (i.e., as scholars, commissioned authors, media prosumers, extension workers, and citizen-critics), textbook authors deal with various institutional and structural contexts in the process of textbook task development, namely (1) the parameters set by the state's curriculum guide, (2) the commercial nature of the publishing firm, (3) the didactic nature of textbook writing, (4) the decadent character of mainstream media, and (5) the strong individualist influence of westernized education, culture, and society. All these macro realities militate against the conceptualization of a coherently politico-communicative and critico-ethical instructional device and assessment instrument. In the study of Bautista (2021), it was revealed that teachers prefer instructional materials that follow the government's prescribed curriculum. Considering the business-oriented character of most textbook companies, these publishing firms are less likely to produce a knowledge product that will *sharply* diverge from the customary and state-rendered discursive and pedagogical practices. By and large, the default didactic (and also oftentimes pedantic) attributes of mainstream education limit the learners to take a more active part in the formulation and adoption of textbook tasks and assessments. Mainstream broadcast, print and online media also contribute to this '*cultural disaster*' by depriving the students and the broader education stakeholders of alternative perspectives and models in news-making and social commentary which could have also served as bases for critical media text and industry analysis. The individualist neoliberal doctrine of the west likewise hinders the public from fully realizing that tackling media dysfunctions and information pathologies require

a thoroughgoing change in *systems* and *structures*, and not just *individuals*.

Trifocal Meta-attributes

The ideal textbook task design, therefore, needs to reflect the following mutually reinforcing attributes: (1) strong community-oriented character (civic intentionality), (2) situated and predicated in the social realities of the community (place-based), and (3) demonstrative of collective reflective action (critical praxis). Based on the instructional materials covered by this qualitative inquiry, the *tri-focal meta-attributes* of civic intentionality, critical place-based inquiry, and critical praxis were reflected and embodied in the textbook tasks, however, in *varying coverage* and *degrees only*. As observed, no textbook tasks and learning activities possess all these trifocal meta-attributes entirely but a combination of some constructs and elements only, i.e., (1) tasks that involve self-reflection but devoid of reflective action, (2) tasks that incorporate community dimension but are limited to planning and conceptualization only, (3) tasks that call for individual responsibility but does not elevate it in the collective level, and (4) tasks with community application but does not involve critico-ideological analysis, among others. However, it is encouraging enough that the constructs and elements of civic intentionality, critical place sensitivity, and criticality have already started to be consciously reflected and developed in the media and information literacy textbook task design.

Critical Textbook Pedagogy and Politics

As a knowledge product, textbook serves a range of pedagogical functions,

i.e., (1) reading material, (2) supplementary resource for teaching, (3) basis for discussion, (4) anchorage of class lectures, and, in the context of this theoretical and methodological exposition, (5) source of academic tasks and learning activities (Davey 1988 as cited in Anderson-Bakken, Jegstad, & Bakken 2020). Directly, textbooks contribute to learning by putting forward "what students should be able to do with the content" (Valverde et al. 2002 as cited in Anderson-Bakken, Jegstad, Bakken 2020) and this proposed action upon the content can be potentially *implemented* and *accomplished* through the textbook tasks.

In order to be critical in its strong political sense, textbooks therefore must include tasks that will train the learners to identify the sources of power and patterns of power distribution as well as how this power configuration impacts on pedagogy and practice. It is also important to reveal how this instructional device works with or against the dominant structures of power through its discursive and pedagogical imperatives and counter-imperatives. Within this context, textbook task must not be apprehended as a value-neutral pedagogical device but as a socially constructed *politico-ideological knowledge product*. As a "zone of transaction" (Genette 1997), textbook tasks should not be underestimated as they are potentially instrumental in achieving the objectives of *knowledge acquisition, knowledge creation*, and *knowledge sharing*. From the functionalist perspective, this textbook segment allows the students to apply their learning from various areas of academic literacy – informational, technical, technological, and digital. However, invoking North (2009), critical textbooks must more crucially contribute to the goal of promoting social justice education through "critical, relational, democratic, and visionary competencies".

Through civic-oriented pedagogy, textbooks therefore should be re-imagined as social technologies designed to strengthen political connections and forge united actions among the learners and their collaborators in the community. Orthodox textbooks tend to isolate the learners and render them as ivory tower academics divorced from the *socio-material* and *socio-cultural realities* of the localities. In this regard, textbooks must be 'guarded from intellectual gatekeepers' (pun intended) who undermine the progressive potential of these instructional media by maliciously turning them into what Giroux (2012) referred as "moral anesthesia and political firewalls" in favor of the cruel and duplicitous economic systems and knowledge regimes. Cultural products such as textbooks have long been methodically employed in obscuring and making dull the public's political consciousness and conditioning them into believing about the presumed ideal conditions under the prevailing socio-economic and socio-intellectual order.

Based on the foregoing exposition, the broader social terrain that defined textbook task production therefore needs to be critically understood as shaped and influenced by the (1) shifts and contradictions in ideological and discursive patterns, (2) social relevance of the curriculum, (3) persistence of the market model in the textbook industry in particular and the culture industry in general, and (4) the continuing struggle for social and epistemic justice by the progressive forces in the media and education sectors.

In the historical context of Jose Rizal's valuable contribution in the struggle against colonial and despotic rule, knowledge served as a very crucial element. In our contemporary fight for human rights and against social exclusions, this pursuit for knowledge as a fundamental human goal remains unchanged whereby critical media

and information literacy has a very substantial role to play. Within this context, alternative education as argued by Freire and Giroux then becomes both a *practice of freedom* and an *act of resistance*.

Implications

Based on the foregoing analysis, the following implications emerged in relation to how this study can potentially contribute to instructional and media policy reforms.

1. Implication to the social practice of textbook task conceptualization

A particular *task culture* may emerge and develop in a specific subject area, and such may proceed noticeably or unnoticeably (Bakken & Andersson-Bakken 2017, Dahl 1997, and Valverde et al. 2002 as cited in Anderson-Bakken, et al. 2020). Task culture pertains to the values and conventions that govern the conceptualization, formulation, and employment of tasks. Essentially, the task culture is a '*subculture within the subject culture*' (Höttecke & Silva 2011 as cited in Anderson-Bakken, Jegstad, & Bakken 2020). If it is conceived to emerge only over a long period of extended practice, then one can argue that the specific media and information literacy task culture as a relatively new subject area in the Philippine K-12 education curriculum would not qualify to have developed one yet. However, if *media education* in general is to be perceived as a field that has long been taught by the textbook authors as a separate subject or a major component of other subjects that they handle(d) (e.g., Media Studies, Journalism and Communication, among others) in another level of education (e.g., collegiate or graduate studies), then it can be claimed that it has already started possessing

elements that would later on constitute as a distinct task culture. Based on these assumptions and as an implication of this study, the *MIL task culture* can conceivably be a viable area of *action research* to further improve the craft of critical media education praxis.

2. Implication to instructional materials development

Educators' Training

The prospective adoption of discursive and pedagogical counter-imperatives necessitates that the educational institutions provide adequate and sustained training to textbook authors and classroom teachers in both dimensions of philosophy and practice. This formal training must include civic intentionality, critical place-based inquiry, and critical praxis to ensure that they do not just form as *incidental* parts of the framework, discourse, and pedagogy. This research also reiterates that critical discourses cannot be effectively taught, understood, and enacted without the adoption of counterpart critical pedagogies (i.e., parallel strategy and critical synergy).

Assessment

In Alverno College in the United States, for instance, the assessment praxis it adopted heavily draws from the very concept's profound etymological origin, i.e., "*assidere*" which means to "sit down beside". As an institution of higher learning, it views assessment as "occasion for people to sit down beside each other in a democratic position of close observation and careful judgment based on explicit, public

criteria" (Wulff 1997). Although this approach in assessment is conceived to democratically govern the social relationships between teachers and students as co-learners, it must also be envisioned and pursued to extend further to include the broader development community. In the context of assessing textbooks and the textbook tasks, this alternative and collective system of evaluation must explore involving not just the publishing firm's editorial team, the consultants, and the authors but also the teachers, students, parents, media practitioners, civil society organizations as well as the local community.

The expansive nature of education must pave the way to greater democratization of learning and one of the ways to actualize this is by providing students with the opportunity to conceptualize and suggest alternative learning activities in any or combination of the following mechanisms and platforms, i.e., (1) as a stage in the process of textbook production, (2) as a component of the periodic textbook revision, and/or (3) as a part of modifying textbook tasks in the course of being adopted in class.

As primary stakeholders in the learning process, students must also be trusted and empowered in conceptualizing and proposing learning tasks and assessment styles that based on their thoughtful evaluation are in line with their sectoral interest. This social practice will enable the students to *co-design* and therefore *co-own* the textbook tasks and learning activities as *learning collaborators* and *student consultants*. Publishers and authors should also afford the students the flexibility in dealing with and responding to the textbook tasks by providing them with more choices of topics to work on as well as the opportunity to assess their own and/or each other's outputs. Through the more flexible textbook task design (e.g., open inquiry), the students will be encouraged to

(1) set their own contextualized objectives, (2) develop their own systematic procedures, and (3) formulate their own perceptive questions to enrich their independent and interdependent learning experience.

Considering the complex structural and institutional arrangements surrounding instructional materials development, Limage (2005) maintained that a quality textbook must be a collective endeavor involving “a team of subject specialist, curriculum expert, good practicing teacher, and an imaginative writer”. She, however, lamented that academic resources such as textbooks most often than not “are not produced in these ideal conditions” (Limage 2005). Yasar (2009) as cited in Bakken and Andersson-Bakken (2021) reported that in Turkey “curriculum development experts and assessment and evaluation experts” form part of the geography textbook writing team. In the Philippine context, it is traditionally composed of in-house subject area coordinator, external/internal subject area consultant, and commissioned author (or, if not, an in-house writer).

As a counterpoint to the orthodox learning paradigm and practice, it is incumbent upon the education authorities to democratically involve and engage the traditionally marginalized students and community stakeholders as collaborators in instructional materials development, beyond their conventional roles as passive end-users and data sources.

3. Implication to the development of Critical Textbook Studies as a field of inquiry

Textbooks belong to a specific type of media, i.e., *print media*. Within this context, it is the contention of this research that instructional materials in media and information

literacy must also allot a substantial discussion about book (or textbook) as a 'form of media' as well as require tasks pertaining to the *political economy of book production, distribution, and utilization*, including contentious topics surrounding this knowledge product such as "book banning" and "book burning" similar to the ones instantiated by Campos (2016). The practice of incorporating tasks in instructional materials that *critically* and *discursively* analyze books as well as textbooks will help learners develop the skill of critical reflexivity in evaluating their exposure to didactic forms of media. Having been long accustomed to the orthodox discursive lenses and pedagogical values, mainstream textbook stakeholders run the risk of failing to critically apprehend this media form, thereby turning a blind eye to what Gonsalvez (2013) pointed out in her citizenship education study as possible "*gaps, exclusions, and oversights*". While there were few tasks and learning activities that deal with the critical apprehension of books, there were none about textbooks in particular except for a simple true or false question regarding the need for textbooks to follow a prescribed curriculum (Magpile 2016: 163). An alternative textbook that is true to its transformative, liberating, and empowering attributes should also include tasks that will contemplatively make sense and assess this pedagogical device as a *cultural product* in general and as an *instructional media* in particular (i.e., a set of textbook tasks discursively and reflectively problematizing textbooks).

As an academic and research field, Textbook Studies is increasingly gaining credence and momentum. In fact, a bachelor's degree in Book Studies is already being offered in Johanne Guttenberg University and this degree program covers "contemporary and historical research issues relating to book studies especially in the

areas of production, distribution, and reception". In connection with this academic trend, it is also the aim of this communication research to contribute to the emerging subfield of *Critical Textbook Studies*.

4. Implication to the designing of *development communication-oriented* MIL

It can be gleaned from several of the prescribed student tasks and assigned readings some elements and constructs of development communication. These can be observed in the community-oriented textbook tasks in the form of social mobilization and community dialogue projects (Zarate 2016, Alagaran 2016, and Liquigan 2016)) as well as in the recommended development-oriented readings such as UNESCO's "The Development of Community Media in Southeast Asia" and Saunders and Goddard's "The Role of Mass Media in Facilitating Community Education and Child Abuse Prevention Strategies" (Liquigan 2016: 54 and 99). From this list of further readings, it can also be inferred how Liquigan (2016: 99) is making the students realize about the "main limitation of mass communication when they are used for mass media-assisted eradication of social problems". This runs consistent with the contention of development communication and knowledge management specialist Dr. Alexander G. Flor (1998) about the drawbacks of mass communication being "media-centric and source-oriented", and not *people-focused*.

From the critical standpoint, a commendable learning initiative is introducing the students to alternative theoretical underpinnings that do not conventionally form part of mainstream academic materials. A task along this line by Liquigan (2016: 27) is requiring the students to apply the "normative theories of media" in analyzing the

various contemporary media types in the Philippines by letting them read and study Dr. Alexander G. Flor's Development Communication: The Fifth Theory of the Press and use it as a basis for a class debate. Other approaches, elements, and concepts in development communication that are also reflected in the textbook tasks include advocacy communication, social marketing, social mobilization, and information and knowledge management, among others. This research envisions a version of critical Media and Information Literacy textbook along the *development communication* paradigm and practice.

5. Implication to future research agenda

Given the scope and coverage of the present study, it is recommended in the conduct of future research to compare the textbook tasks between the initial batches and the subsequent revisions of these instructional materials and find out how (1) the pandemic, (2) the change in national leadership, (3) curricular reforms, and (4) other major shifts and disruptions in the global, transnational, and local levels redefined and reshaped the discursive and pedagogical patterns. This will also provide a viable opportunity to discover if a certain "task culture" indeed developed over time (Andersson-Bakken et al., 2020). A comparative study of the local and international textbook tasks can also be undertaken to understand how the two sets of instructional assessments are similar or different in terms of what development and policy dilemmas were instantiated and what modes of intervention were interposed to deal with these social and sectoral concerns. A critical discourse analysis of the state-rendered instructional materials in the form of learning materials (LM) can also be undertaken

from which the result of this current research can be compared or contrasted. A critical ethnomethodological study featuring the textbook authors may also be pursued to deepen the analysis of their discursive practice and task culture as a discourse community or sub-community. Lastly, a critical phenomenological study may also be carried out to analyze the reception, perception, and interpretation of the teachers and learners as end-users of the textbook tasks. These proposed research agenda can be pursued using the framework, methodology, and analysis of the critical textual, process, and contextual analyses of this qualitative communication inquiry as jumping-off point.

Recommendations

Given the potentials as well as limitations of the current set of media and information literacy instructional materials, the overarching challenge now is how it can be rendered more creatively, critically, and socially committed, i.e., one that is more action-based, accountability-driven, and community-oriented. In accordance with how media scholar Paul Mihailidis (2018) envisioned media literacy, educators and textbook authors need to re-orient textbook task section towards serving its public sphere orientation and civic-oriented mission. Once already introduced or if already adopted albeit in varying degrees such as the case of the featured textbook titles in this study, the greater challenge to education stakeholders then is how to make this set of empowering and transformative philosophies, pedagogies, and practices the norm in media and information literacy education. Hence, based on the foregoing, the following specific recommendations are earnestly proposed and forwarded.

1. Strengthen interdisciplinary inquiry.

While it has been observed that interdisciplinarity is already being applied in the existing textbook task designs, it is recommended that this practice is also broadly adopted by other media and information literacy textbook authors and educators. And while media and information literacy has already shown openness to cross-connecting with other fields of inquiry, the pattern of relationship must be *reciprocal*. Science and Mathematics education, for instance, should also adopt and integrate media and information literacy in its discursive and pedagogical approaches.

2. Employ values-driven cross-curricular approach.

In designing and developing textbook tasks, academic authors need to encourage students to integrate their acquired knowledge and skills from other subject areas with those that they gained from media and information literacy and apply them in understanding and dealing with the complex social and sectoral problems in the community. To amplify this approach's discursive and pedagogical potential, media and information literacy needs to fulfill its trifocal functions by not only being knowledge-oriented and skill-based but by more so serving as a values-driven subject area. Broadly speaking, public values encompass social cohesion, political participation, economic equity, cultural integrity, and ecological sustainability, among others. Given this set of mutually reinforcing public values, it can be inferred how cross-disciplinarily connecting Media and Information Literacy (MIL) with Understanding Culture, Society and Politics (UCSP), Inquiries, Investigations and Immersions (III) or Disaster Readiness and Risk Reduction (DRRR), among other subjects in the Senior Highschool

curriculum, can be particularly advantageous in engendering relevant, integrated, contextualized, empowering, and development-oriented media and information literacy education.

3. Re-assert public values.

Consistent with public sphere pedagogy, textbook tasks must be re-imagined as a *social technology* that can be strategically employed in re-asserting and mainstreaming *public values*. As a subject area with strong socio-civic mission, media and information literacy needs to be redesigned as a viable platform in reactivating the public sphere wherein students, their co-learners, and their community interlocutors can (1) meet as engaged citizens, (2) deliberate on public issues, (3) make a collective stand, and (4) mobilize their ranks in taking informed and sustained action. Towards this end, progressive education scholar Henry Giroux (2012) provides a sound and critical advice why public values must be fought for and re-centered in the people's social and political lives, to wit:

> *Public values along with the public good have been reduced to nostalgic reminders of another era…Rather than viewed as a legacy that needs to be reclaimed, reimagined, and renewed, visions of the public good are consigned to the distant past, a passing curiosity like a museum piece perhaps worth viewing, but not worth struggling to revive as either an ideal or a reality* (Giroux 2012: 58).

As a concretization, public sphere-oriented media education can be adopted in celebrating and immortalizing the heroism of patriots who joined local revolts and national revolutions. This type of situated learning runs consistent with critical place-based inquiry considering the emphasis on the historical struggle for sovereign rights

and national liberation. Heroism and nationalism, along this line, are public virtues that must not just be "nostalgic reminders of another era" but part of the *continuing struggle* for independence in the context of many nations' *neocolonial present.*

In addition, textbook tasks and learning activities that entail community involvement should also actively engage all the stakeholders throughout the process. Ideally, these textbook tasks must bring about broader and more consistent community participation in the various stages of planning, execution, and assessment. In invoking Giroux, every activity that involves community participation must have a central and clear set of public values as *ethico-moral anchors* (e.g., justice, well-being, inclusion, sustainability, solidarity, and integrity, among others).

In critical media education, the foremost consideration centers on answering the overarching questions of "for what agenda?" and "for whose interest?" when learners create, circulate, and consume media content. Within this context, critical media education therefore must serve the democratic interest and development agenda of the hitherto marginalized and downtrodden segments of the society. In specific terms, critical media and information literacy should be strategically positioned not only in dealing with problems of mundane concerns (i.e., commuting or purchasing decisions) but more so in pursuing socio-political objectives of grander scale (i.e., *democratization, decolonization*, and *deglobalization* projects). Relatedly, critical media and information literacy can also help establish how the activities of day-to-day (i.e., micro) are, in fact, linked to the broader politico-economic aspirations of (1) expanding political democracy, (2) dismantling (neo)colonial structures, and (3) confronting neoliberal globalization (i.e., macro). Towards this end, *consumer* and *transport activism* can, therefore, be

conceived as the collective expressions and progressive embodiments of what were initially perceived as personal and mundane at the cursory level. The learners, therefore, need to realize that the set of competencies which they will acquire functions not only for self-development (i.e., self-change) but more imperatively for loftier societal objectives (i.e., change of broader conditions). In this regard, the action-oriented potential of textbook tasks is a viable politico-communicative platform of *application* and *engagement*.

As a distinct form of media, textbook aids in linking the *private* to the *public realm* and in encompassing various levels of influence and engagement. The first instance is between the textbook publishing firm and the authors through the book publishing agreement. The second instance is between the academic authors and the classroom teachers and students through the textbook as a *mediated instructional device*. The third instance is between the teachers and the students through the actual adoption and application of the textbook tasks. Prospectively, the fourth instance is between the students and their co-learners as well as their community interlocutors through the enactment of civic-intentioned, place-based, and praxis-oriented textbook task design. It must be underscored, however, that this public sphere pedagogy cannot be fully realized and accomplished without inclusive communication and the empowering and ethical use of language (i.e., avoiding the use of stigmatizing, discriminatory, and hateful language).

Given its wide adoption as a pedagogical tool, textbook can influence and shape the learning experience of students through the issues it mediates, lessons it presents, and the tasks it prescribes. As such, the manifold possibilities that the textbook tasks and

learning activities can potentially achieve cannot be underestimated, especially when aligned along the framework and practice of place-oriented and public sphere pedagogy.

4. Employ and mainstream information and knowledge management.

Textbook tasks need to follow a logical progression that builds on the previous learning activities to achieve scaffolding, integration, and coherence. The knowledge products and data sets that were generated from previous learning activities may serve as useful inputs in subsequent related tasks. This practice provides the students with the basic training in information and knowledge management (IKM). For instance, the instruction of Liquigan (2016) to require the students to regularly save their final outputs in electronic form and have them uploaded and consolidated in a file-sharing platform is notable in this respect. It must also be optimized as a springboard in establishing an online community of learners (CoL). This is similar with Yuvienco's final requirement for the course which enjoins the students to put up a blog site that will serve as the "continuing portfolio" of their "work-in-progress and course submission", aimed at achieving the pedagogical objectives to "discover, disclose, connect, co-create, and demonstrate".

5. Apply the critical praxis method.

The assigned tasks, therefore, must be designed as a *coherent whole*. A disjointed set of activities does not promote progressive and integrative learning. For instance, a media text analysis about a controversial commercial advertisement (i.e., *self-reflection*) can serve as a conceptual basis in drafting a letter to the editor about the student's

disdain to the contentious advertisement in question (i.e., *reflective action*) and, subsequently, in organizing an online signature drive with fellow media ethics advocates from various sectors (i.e., *collective reflective action*).

As a social practice, media and information literacy education should not start and end with self-reflective exercises. While self-reflectivity through the understanding of personal media habit and lifestyle is important, it must only serve as a starting point in the process of achieving critical praxis.

It must be made clear, therefore, that the tendency to *over-rely* on self-reflective media text analysis is *incongruent* with the precepts of civic intentionality. Self-reflection and media text analysis must only serve as starting points and should *not* be the be-all and end-all of media literacy education. Ultimately, the consummate end-goal must be to develop learners who are critical producers, sharers, and consumers of media with strong community and civic orientation or, in other words, those who possess both deep "concern" and the "capacity to act" (Boyte 2014 as cited in Mihailidis 2018).

6. Update and expand the scope of social and sectoral issues.

Major patterns of change and continuity can be observed in the Philippine media and socio-political landscapes. Media educators, therefore, must be critically aware of these old and new arrangements. As such, in the subsequent textbook revisions and the publication of new titles, the following controversial media-related local issues need to be included and foregrounded for critical discussion and analysis: (1) non-renewal of the ABS-CBN franchise, (2) pulling out of subversive books from the libraries, (3) red-tagging and vandalizing of book shops, and, most contentiously, (4) journalist killings.

7. Organize and mobilize alternative discourse communities.

As an alternative discourse community, non-orthodox textbook writers must organize and mobilize their ranks and serve as a countervailing force in the academic sector by producing knowledge products that (1) *expose* structural inequities, (2) *oppose* the structures of oppression as embodied in language and communication, and (3) *propose* structural change *in* and *through* media education. In accordance with education's moral mission, they owe it to the many students across generations who will adopt their instructional materials to provide them with critical, transformative, and emancipatory learning experience.

8. Adopt critical media and information literacy.

Critical media and information literacy is crucial in making possible what Campos (2016: 27) pointed out as the propensity to "imagine a world other than the repressive present". Through his thought-provoking questions, Campos makes the learners question the tendency of mainstream media in restricting the public to "speak about and think only of limited options and possibilities". This counter-discursive orientation is consistent with "ideology critique" which is central to critical media literacy as an alternative media education approach (Kellner & Share 2007: 5). In this sense, the idea of envisioning an alternative social order is only possible by being *politically aware*, *discursively reflective*, and *pedagogically critical*.

More than an academic subject in its functional sense, Media and Information Literacy must also be conceived as a platform for *moral education* and *democratic literacy*. As a *course* and *discourse*, it should foster a strong commitment among the learners to uphold truth and justice in media production, dissemination, and

consumption. In this period when information is increasingly being weaponized to undermine democratic rights, processes and institutions, the education stakeholders need to be resolute and persistent in promoting critical information literacy across regional areas, sectoral interests, and age groups, especially the marginalized and vulnerable. Textbook tasks, therefore, must consistently reflect these breadth and depth in the learning design and strategy.

As critical media and information scholars, students must not only learn where to locate and how to utilize information but, more crucially, how to also identify and analyze the ideological and discursive positions of its producers and users. Citing journalist Maria Ressa (2020), information becomes the first casualty under an authoritarian regime given its loathsome agenda to distort established facts, blur social realities, and manipulate public opinion. Through this propaganda tactic, despots underhandedly control the narrative and instrumentalize it in their politico-ideological favor. According to political economist Roland Simbulan (2022), the "bigger challenge is how to counter the fascist liars in the infosphere" and part of this *cyber-struggle* is to "creatively curate the most watched influencers and proactively produce reactions to correct disinformation and false narratives".

9. Rethink and reconfigure role assignments, social contexts, and pedagogical goals.

The instantiations of social contexts in the assigned exercises do not have to be mostly business-oriented and campus-based in character. Meanwhile, those which are set in the public realm (i.e., non-commercial context) must possess a stronger issue-

based orientation to render the tasks more reflective of the social complexities and contradictions that characterize the broader development terrain. Along this line, academic authors may adopt and instantiate the following social roles, development contexts, and pedagogical goals in the table below to engender a more diversified, issue-oriented, and community-grounded learning experience.

Table 12: Proposed role assignments, contexts, and goals

Roles	Contexts	Goals
community organizer	rural community; dominance of industrial agriculture	Create a brochure that will promote *agroecology* and *regenerative agriculture.*
community communication practitioner	coastal village vulnerable to disaster and risk	Stage a community theater that will promote risk and emergency communication.
librarian	local library; need to popularize and re-imagine public libraries	Organize a symposium (online or face-to-face) to introduce the concept of a *human library*.
cooperative member	transport cooperative; spatial and transport injustice	Produce an infographic to promote *sustainable* and *inclusive transportation*.
market administrator	public market; rampant food wastage	Organize a mobile patrol team (MPT) to campaign for sustainable food management practices that will contribute in solving food wastage.
sport anthropologist	sports fest; gender inequality in sports	Organize an exhibit with the theme "sports, gender, and inclusion".

agriculturist or nutritionist	food bazaar; dominance of unhealthy fast-food culture	Put up a booth promoting indigenous vegetables, ethno-nutrition, or slow food philosophy.
visual artist	local museum; historical distortion and denialism	Present a *tableau* in the museum lobby featuring the anti-dictatorship protest movement.
poet	Alternative Classroom Learning Experience (ACLE); development aggression, militarization, and ethnocide	Organize an *open mic poetry* (online or face-to-face) about the life and struggle of a social justice hero or martyr.

Media and information literacy education, therefore, must enable learners to understand the complexities and contradictions of community life. Accordingly, this approach to learning will make the students realize that media education can never be *contextless*, *detached*, and *apolitical*.

10. Avoid the pitfall of poverty pornography.

Some textbook tasks require students to produce documentary films featuring the plight and struggle of the marginalized sectors. However, without formal ethical training in media production and moral guidance from their teachers, the students even with the best intentions run the risk of unconsciously committing poverty pornography. Below are general ethical reminders which the researcher developed in 2020 for his social responsibility communication class which can also be adopted in guiding the media

production of MIL students.

Table 13: Avoiding poverty pornography

- Avoid depicting the poor without tackling the root causes of their deplorable condition.
- Avoid misrepresenting and stereotyping them as “helpless”, “dependent”, and “lazy”.
- Avoid disregarding the need to get their free and prior informed consent (FPIC) when interviewing them and/or using documentation technologies.
- Avoid depicting oneself or your group as the “messiah of the poor”.
- Avoid creating the impression that the media production is the panacea to their long-standing social suffering.
- Avoid giving the poor communities false hopes.
- Avoid overshadowing their narratives with your version of the story.

11. Initiate community of learners (CoL) and community of practice (CoP).

Considering the drawback of textbooks in terms of currency, it is judicious that academic authors also include online academic resources (e.g., websites and network databases). But beyond this author-prescribed materials, students must also be encouraged to start and develop their own repository beginning with their literature search where they can also share their critical insights and analyses in a designated platform. This is similar with the learning log approach employed by knowledge management scholar Dr. Alexander G. Flor in the courses on communication policy and planning, information and knowledge management, and information and communication media technologies in the Faculty of Information and Communication Studies at the UP Open University. This resource sharing by the community of learners may begin in the

section level and expand eventually in the year, campus, and interschool levels.

Textbook tasks need to create an enabling environment that will also encourage learners to formulate and develop their own ideas about the lessons in class and be provided with opportunities and venues to present their original contributions. Given the available information and communication technologies, an *online community of practice* (virtual CoP) among the district or diocesan schools, for instance, is a viable strategy to serve this pedagogical end. This will allow them to confer and exchange insights with fellow students from other learning contexts and communities and such can even be expanded across regions or even countries for a more diverse academic encounter that is also promotive of *intercultural education* and *communication*.

12. Promote alternative assessment mechanisms.

Textbook tasks that involved the community members as co-organizers, respondents, key informants, seminar participants, or project beneficiaries should also serve as co-evaluators. More specifically, alternative assessment mechanisms must actively engage the participation of the community members in evaluating the student outputs in their performance tasks, especially if the social and sectoral issue in question also concerns and involves them as *critical stakeholders*.

13. Document, replicate, and adopt the best learning modalities.

Each textbook title possesses its own set of exemplary textbook tasks and best practices that can be adopted and replicated to form part of an integrated version. However, the intense competition in the business sector (i.e., market model) makes this

far from happening. As such, the role of the critical stakeholders in media education (i.e., public sphere model) is crucial in creating social spaces/platforms/mechanisms that will allow the culture of sharing and adoption of the best learning modalities and strategies in MIL instructional materials development in general and textbook task design in particular.

14. Ignite the culture of hope, action, and perseverance.

As instruments of transformation, textbooks need to bear the *message of hope* and *persistence*, and such attributes should also be expressed not only in the main text but also in the task and assessment section. In the quest for knowledge, sociologist Randolf David (2004) believes it is important that one finds "excitement and hope" in the learning process and that academic disciplines become social tools to "inspire and move" individuals and groups. Ideally, both schools and communities must be places of hope, anticipation, motivation, inspiration, and action. These *positive* and *active* notions about learning and the social ecology where it operates are critical elements in engendering the collective agency of both the students and their co-learners in school and in the community.

15. Advance participatory and community-oriented media research.

As types of summative assessment, textbook performance tasks and culminating activities must possess a strong community-oriented research dimension. As a concretization of *learning by doing*, community-oriented media literacy research will enable the students and their interlocutors to develop a more profound understanding

about the local community and gain new and deeper insights about its contested ecologies, economies, histories, politics, and heritage. This research culture can also potentially lead to the introduction of participatory action research (PAR) in the community where the "research is no longer *of them* but more importantly *by them*" (Tujan 2004). Through this type of activist research, the members of the community become "active participants of the research process" and, by extension, of their own development as a sector (Tujan 2004).

16. Apply critical public sphere and place-based pedagogies.

Public sphere and critical place-based pedagogies engender group solidarity between the students and community members as *co-learners*. It also allows the students to transcend the structures and strictures of orthodox education, which most often the case is too self-contained, school-centric, and pedantic. By employing critical place-based approach, for instance, students can be encouraged to attend a public hearing of an environmental ordinance in the local council and learn about the dialectical interaction of social forces in the city (*lungsod*) and sub-city (*barangay*) policymaking and political processes.

By utilizing their civic-oriented media and information literacy skills, students can contribute to the drafting of local legislations that are aligned with the community needs, values, and aspirations. In this contextualized learning ecology, the students will be able to critically apprehend the implications of the (1) distribution of power, (2) interplay of forces, (3) flow of communication, and (4) clash of values and priorities. Exposure to various community engagements will enable the learners to grapple with the multiplicity

of perspectives and the diverging positionalities of individuals and interest groups. In order to substantially and democratically participate in the local policy development in the community, it is also necessary that the learners develop the skills to locate, access, analyze, evaluate and utilize relevant information pertaining to the (1) local ecology, (2) policymaking process, (3) environmental governance and politics as well as (4) the broader societal contexts. A locality is home to diverse sectors and institutions, namely schools, local libraries, museums, local government offices, banks, public markets, malls, cooperatives, non-governmental organizations, law enforcement, transport terminals, churches, public parks, plant nurseries, sport facilities, and animal shelters, among others. The opportunities for learning that this *social, sectoral,* and *institutional diversity* affords is something that must not be taken aside by the stakeholders in media education and hence should be mainstreamed in the instructional materials development. Within this context, media and information literacy plays a critical role in fostering *communication, collaboration, creativity, and criticality* between the school and other social and sectoral groups in the locality. For their part, textbook authors can develop tasks that instantiate media and information literacy-related learning activities in partnership and collaboration with these social institutions, especially on sectoral agenda of mutual concerns such as democratic literacy, cultural heritage preservation, financial inclusion, sustainable livelihood, participatory governance, sustainable transportation, ecological management, and sustainable leisure, among others. Towards this end, critical place-based media and information literacy must also be instrumentalized to promote *cross-cultural awareness, critical citizenship,* and *cross-cutting development initiatives* to relate meaningfully with local groups from various

subcultures and subgroups.

For instance, through critical place-based inquiry, students can also assess the state of public libraries in their respective localities. Library of all kinds (i.e., school library, community library, special library) perform very important roles in information literacy and knowledge management. However, the changing pattern of the public's information seeking-behavior as well as the increasing cases of library closures globally and locally due to rampant budget cuts necessitate a sustained library education and promotion advocacy program to reverse these disconcerting trends. In the level of media and information literacy education, this can be addressed by understanding the traditional and evolving roles of libraries as well as other information and knowledge institutions within the context of a social environment that is increasingly being characterized by disruptions and uncertainties.

Diverse contexts can be observed and foregrounded within the local settings considering the multisectoral composition and multicultural character of most communities. However, apart from the contexts already instantiated in the existing set of textbook tasks, authors must also not cease from identifying and discovering other *contexts* and *sub-contexts* where learning can also be inspired, engendered, and cultivated.

17. Engender transformative education.

This communication research finds wisdom in Sr. Lourdes Dulay's (2004) assertion that *transformative education* is "an on-going historical action that is integrally linked with all the sectors" (i.e., intersectoral, multistakeholder) and consistent with its strong social justice orientation the focus is on the most vulnerable and "therefore are

the most determined for transformation". Within this context, there is an even greater need to allot more attention (and space) to the issues and struggles that deeply concern the marginalized sectors. Dulay (2004) further argued that this would involve (1) "walking the less travelled path", (2) "unlearning mastered familiar ways", and (3) "shifting to new and perhaps unsettling ways of looking at life and its context". In the context of textbook task design, this would involve a shift from the conventional true or false, matching type, and fill-in-the-blanks assessment types towards the collaborative, critical, community-oriented pedagogy such as participatory action research, countermapping, photo voice, photo or video elicitation technique, ethno-videography, body-mapping, and community theater, among others.

18. Employ *countermapping* as critical place-based media pedagogy.

In rendering media and information literacy more transformative and empowering as a subject area, Nancy Peluso's (1995) countermapping is earnestly proposed as a summative assessment. Veritably, Peluso's counter-mapping approach applies all the elements and constructs of critical place-based inquiry, i.e., (1) "reading the world", (2) "understanding how the place matters", (3) "leveraging technology", and (4) "telling the stories in various perspectives" (Langran & DeWitt 2020). In the Philippine context, the counter-mapping action research, for instance, by the team of critical geographer Arnisson Andre Ortega (2019) sought to interrogate the conventionally rendered maps and the orthodox paradigms and perspectives that these cultural artifacts represent and embody. In stark contrast to the liberating attribute of countermaps, mainstream business- and state-rendered cartographies are instrumentalized and exploited by the

power elites to represent and assert (1) the vast scope of their private ownership, (2) the mainstream concept of development/underdevelopment, and (3) the practice of dominant land-use planning. By and large, these bourgeois map versions are communicated through sophisticated master plans, location maps, and marketing collaterals (Ortega 2019). Through countermapping, the marginalized communities comprised of farmers, fisherfolks, and indigenous people take an active part in the production of their own map versions (Ortega 2019). As such, they performed the role of being co-creators/co-authors of this act (and product) of collective resistance. Countermapping is essentially a communicative act of interest articulation, social mobilization, and rights claiming. Within this context, students can contribute to participatory action research by using their media and information literacy competencies as well as social and communication research skills. Contrary to conventional research, participatory action research such as countermapping involves the community in the planning and setting of objectives as well as in the validation and evaluation processes. Data collection techniques are also democratic and inclusive in nature which cover walking interviews, mapping workshops, mind maps, and auto-ethno-photography sessions, among others (Ortega 2019). Countermapping also presents another opportunity for the educators to cross-connect Media and Information Literacy (MIL) with Understanding, Culture, Society, and Politics (UCSP), Inquiries, Investigations, and Immersion (III), Empowerment Technologies, and Introduction to the Philosophy of Human Person, among others. As people's document, the countermap serves as a politico-ideological assertion (non-material) and physical embodiment (material) of the counter-histories, counter-memories, and counter-narratives of the community.

Countermapping brings to the fore the people's own version of their lived experiences, aspirations, and struggles.

In addition to public fora, other modes of presentation include "exhibits, literary collections, photobooks, online maps, memes, poster maps, protest maps, and map arts" (Ortega 2019). Engaged media productions such as countermapping seek to give voice to the muted and the inarticulate. In the same vein, it affords the subaltern groups to *re-claim*, *re-define*, and *re-map* their territories according to their collectivist value system, as opposed to the individualist, consumerist, and commercialized bias of the power wielders. This people-oriented media production condemns and interrogates the long history of marginalization and subordination under past colonial regimes and the governments of past and present dispensations as embodied in the ideological and cultural artifacts in the form of school curricula, textbooks, photographs, and, of course, maps. Countermapping is an empowering paradigm and process that allows the disadvantaged communities to communicate their *sense of place* and articulate their *right to self-determination*. It is a politico-communicative act of re-asserting their deep communion with their ancestral land – the wellspring of their *livelihood*, *culture*, and *tradition*.

Comprehensively and coherently, the countermapping strategy employs the five interconnected constructs of civic intentionality, namely agency (*ahensiya*), care (*pagmamalasakit*), critical consciousness (*kritikal na kamalayan*), persistence (*pagpupunyagi*), and emancipation (*paglaya*) through its (1) empowering approach to mobilize communities, (2) deep concern to forge solidarity with the subaltern, (3) perceptive analysis in examining and exposing the hegemonic patterns and

arrangements, (4) sustained effort to raise the community's social consciousness despite drawbacks and limitations, and (5) the consummate end-goal of liberating people from unjust systems and structures.

19. Employ *body-mapping* as critical place-based media pedagogy.

Applying Jane Solomon's *body mapping technique* (Barna 2014) allows learners and their interlocutors to reflectively instrumentalize their sense perceptions in developing *self-understanding*, *other-awareness*, and *place sensitivity*. It is also an effective way of making sense of their surrounding ecologies as well as their personal/collective experiences by asking probing questions that pertain to what the students and their collaborators have thought, seen, read, heard, smelled, talked about, eaten, touched, held, walked through, stood upon, and slept on in the locality (Barna 2014). This can be rendered in an illustration featuring the body parts and their corresponding positive and/or negative personal and collective encounters (Barna 2014). The questions to be answered may be categorized into positive and negative forms, e.g., What something desirable/undesirable have they seen that day? What something desirable/undesirable have they heard that same day? In the context of a highly militarized community (i.e., caught in the crossfires), for instance, that fateful day would have led the community folks to hear gun fires, smell burning objects, and see evacuating distressed families, among others.

The *media use diary* proposed by Alagaran (2019: 24) asks the students to reflect and document what they have "felt, seen, heard and read" in their actual media experience based on what they "like and dislike, agree and disagree with". As a

preliminary activity, this task can be likened to the body-mapping technique that allows the learners to perceive their physical and social world in both its desirable and undesirable elements and dimensions.

20. Expose the manipulative platforms and algorithms.

The illusion of relationship that the fleeting digital communication brings about is analogous to what Mihailidis (2019) pointed out as “deficit of meaningful engagement”. To illustrate and provide context, Hodkinson (2011) as cited in Hollows (2016) argued that the Internet’s “fragmentary effect” tends to impede and discourage engagement with “diverse groups of others as part of the broad publics”. According to Hodkinson (2011) as cited in Hollows (2016), this behavior results from the tendency of the Internet to influence individuals to pursue “particular interests and association with narrower groupings…rather than encourage political interest, knowledge, and participation” in socially relevant and community-oriented endeavors to which they have little to no interest and commitment, thereby creating a vicious cycle of indifference and detachment. This also points to the fact advanced by Mihailidis (2018) regarding how media content and engagement is heavily influenced and distorted by algorithms and platforms. In dealing with these legitimate issues and concerns, textbooks can play a helpful part by exposing the adverse impacts of algorithms and platforms to social relationships in the main texts (through critical digital literacy *online*) as well as by mainstreaming of community-based and praxis-oriented media projects in the textbook tasks (through civic-intentioned media literacy *on the ground*).

Indeed, Mihailidis' observation about "contemporary media literacy initiatives and interventions" being too enamored with content is valid and on point. This traditional bias in terms of focus foregoes the critical dimension of how the content itself is "impacted by algorithms and platforms" (Mihailidis 2018). Such failure to incorporate how the dimension of algorithms and platforms influences *information flow* deprives the learners of the opportunity to critically recognize how even the most well-meaning of messages (i.e., in the form of alternative discourses) and strategies (i.e., in the form of alternative pedagogies) can be undermined by the manner algorithms and platforms were intentionally (and manipulatively) designed and programmed.

The affordances provided by the knowledge society enables its citizens to "access and manage information"; however, as raised by Campos (2016: 152), can it be said that "these information and technological advancements actually moved us to care about the social good, or has it encouraged us to retreat into our own private circles away from the world?". This points to the contentious issue of where and in what condition individuals and institutions want and intend their *technologies of knowledge* to bring and usher them.

In conceptualizing textbook tasks, authors stand to benefit immensely from Stefania Milan's (2019) approach of practicing "freedom from" and "freedom for" in terms of teaching and training the students to apply critical media and information literacy. "Freedom from" functions to liberate the students from textbook tasks that inculcate individualist mindset as well as from the manipulative algorithms and platforms while "freedom for" develops them to become independently and interdependently "engaged in communication and media production in their own terms" (Milan 2019). These

notions of “freedom from” and “freedom for” are attainable and practicable through the praxis of “emancipatory communication” (Milan 2019). As a counter-tradition in media practice, emancipatory communication enables individuals and institutions to gain control of media resources and develop alternative and community-managed communication systems. This is embodied in various forms such as autonomous community gazette, ethno-radio, and local theater as well as what Milan (2019) envisioned as “community-owned wireless network”. In the context of today’s media-saturated ecology, this “freedom from” and “freedom for” movement is conceived and framed along the two-pronged objectives of (1) emancipating the learners from the disruptive and manipulative algorithms and platforms of mainstream digital media and (2) replacing it with a democratic mechanism that operates within an alternative media paradigm, policy, and practice.

21. Distinguish sustainable solutions from “solutionism”.

Media and information literacy as field of social inquiry and situated practice possesses a huge potential in discovering and developing sustainable solutions to social and sectoral problems. However, when this subject area is *paradigmatically* and *programmatically* positioned as the ultimate solution for “all media-related social and psychological ills”, then it (1) “oversimplifies the problems it purports to address, (2) overstates the influence of media on young people, and (3) underestimates the complexity of media education” (Buckingham 2007 as cited in Mihailidis 2018: 6). This reservation of Buckingham is a legitimate concern because it tends to unfairly pass to media and information literacy educators (i.e., teachers and textbook authors alike)

the heavy burden and responsibility of dealing with the broad array of media dysfunctions and information disorders. While media and information literacy education is indeed crucial in contributing to the goal of grappling with social and sectoral problems, it must be accompanied and complemented by (1) politico-ideological education, (2) media policy reform, (3) government regulation, and (4) thoroughgoing structural change. These macro-level interventions and initiatives, therefore, must be strategically employed to create long-lasting and meaningful effect in the individual, community, and policy levels. The collectivist stance and structural approach of confronting information pathologies challenge the individualist notion of narrowly looking at complex problems getting resolved by mere efforts of "self-protection" or "self-regulation". This, therefore, points to the discursive and pedagogical weaknesses of orthodox textbook tasks that do not interpose collectivist and structural perspectives in unpacking intricate social and sectoral issues, thereby failing also in proposing viable and sustainable interventions.

22. Pursue local re-rootedness.

In this era of heightened and saturating virtual engagement and its tendency to bring about social alienation, there must be a concerted effort on the part of the educational and cultural institutions to instill *critical place-based consciousness* among the youth. By re-establishing the deep connection between schools and communities, students will imbibe the social mission of critical media literacy education and its important role in improving the quality of life in *all* its forms and dimensions. In pursuing this ethico-pedagogical goal, media and information literacy needs to be strategically employed as

an empowering and transformative tool. As such, critical place-based media education must serve as a viable counterforce in re-establishing *human connectedness* that has been undermined and eroded by the deeply entrenched market-driven and individualist media, culture, and technology. The fleeting presence at best and total absence at worst of the community-based pedagogy in the textbook tasks of some textbook titles necessitate a serious rethinking of the mainstream media and information literacy education. The need to *re-center* communities in formal education in general and in media and information literacy in particular must be a foremost discursive and pedagogical agenda. This contextualized approach in place-based media and information literacy education engenders the learners to be cognizant of, concerned about, and protective of the available material (e.g., economic and ecological) and non-material resources (e.g., spiritual and non-tangible cultural heritage) within the locality. Situated knowledge about the locality's endowments also develops the students to become advocates of responsible and sustainable management and utilization of this *bio-cultural resource base*. As such, place-based education serves as an effective platform in nurturing and practicing *sustainability consciousness* (Ontong & Le Grange 2014). As an approach, place-based inquiry also promotes a knowledge and research culture that is *connected* and *creative*. However, the greater challenge is to *up the ante* and engender a deeper sense of *criticality* and *vigilance*. The progressive and militant reframing of the original conception of place-based approach (i.e., from conventional place-based to critical place-based inquiry) further enhanced the former's foundational attributes of being "learner-centered, inquiry-based, intergenerational, community-situated, cross-curricular" (Liebtag 2019, Teton Sciences School 2021, Bhat 2016) into

becoming *critico-dialectical*, and hence *anti-colonial, pro-liberation*, and *counter-elite*.

Broadly speaking, the local ecology provides the socio-spatial context for "content acquisition, engaged learning, and meaningful community service" (Demarest 2015). With the aid of critical MIL, this enviable opportunity to engage with the locality will afford the students to (1) learn from the local folks' veritable mine of contextualized knowledge, (2) partner with the community for collaborative learning and participatory action research, and (3) contribute to the effort of organizing and mobilizing communities. Unequivocally, this profound and enriching learning experience aligns consistently with the exposition of Greenland about place-based inquiry's mutually defining goals of "*studying, caring,* and *creating*" (Greenland 2013 as cited in Ontong & Le Grange 2014).

Epilogue

In the discursive and pedagogical sense, the text is invariably an "interesting place of engagement" (Burton 2007) and this is most apparent in the case of the textbook tasks as a potential "zone of transaction" (Genette 1997). As argued by media studies scholar Graeme Burton (2007), "things happen through the texts" and it is in this *unfolding, unraveling,* and *evolving* potential of textbook task (as *text* in its *dialectical context*) that it can *alternatively* serve as an enabler and catalyst of life-affirming, thoroughgoing, and progressive change within the classroom and the campus and, more compellingly, *beyond*.

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