EUROPEAN MEDIA LITERACY STANDARD FOR YOUTH WORKERS

EMELS
FOR YOUTH WORKERS

Introduction

The emergence of digital media have changed the way and the intensity with which young people live, communicate, learn, work, and relax. Due to this widespread diffusion, it is often wrongly assumed that every young person uses digital media in a competent way or will gradually learn it. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Young people very oftern take risks when being online, are subject to manipulation and disinformation, use media as passive consumers. Providing young people with a key set of competences is important for their education and work prospects, as well as personal wellbeing in this digitised society. We aim for happy young people who are able to develop themselves further, connect with others and participate in society through digital media. The latter will also enable them to transform the society they live in.

As media education professionals we noticed a need to have a common reference framework in the field of youth work of what it means to be digitally savvy in an increasingly digitized world. We hope that EMELS will be a tool for youth workers to improve young people's media literacy and that it will help to raise the quality of youth work and training in the field of media education. It can be used in different settings: youth-led organisations, organisations for youth, informal groups or youth services and public authorities.

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The EMELS Standard

The EMELS Standard describes media literacy as a process of preparing individuals – in this case youth workers and young people – for competent use and understanding of digital media. In the standard this falls down into 5 areas of digital competence:

1. Information and data (how to search for information effectively and critically approach it);

2. Media creation and communication (how media can be used for self-expression and creating meaning, in terms of both technical skills and creative process);

3. Resistance and Empowerment (how to stay safe using the media, protect our rights and use media to impact wider community);

4. Understanding media usage of children and young people (what we need to know about media and young people and where to find this information);

5. Training skills and development (how to run media education activities and develop further).

These 5 areas are developed into 16 competences, followed by practical examples of knowledge, skills and attitudes. The competences are also complemented by best practices and training resources.

What can the EMELS Standard do for you as a youth worker?

This competence framework contributes to the ongoing discussion on the understanding and development of young people's digital competences. The standard as such can be used by youth workers to:

1. Self-evaluate the level of digital competences
2. Assess the digital competences of others
3. Set learning goals and identify training opportunities
4. Organise and plan (digital) youth work activities

Guideline on its adoption

Although the standard benefited from the opinions and feedback of a variety of stakeholders, its applicability has not yet been tested. It is therefore likely that once applied in a real youth work context, the different areas and competences will be subject to change. And it must! Because the starting and ending points are not set in stone. Decide as a youth worker which competences already exist in your target group of young people and which are missing or wanted. This will enable you to achieve your mission and goals effectively and efficiently.

Do you wish to know more about the making-of process of the EMELS standard? Read more about it on emels.eu. Questions or remarks? Get in touch with us by e-mail milpeer@mdrn.pl!

European Media Literacy Standard for youth workers

Information and data

To search, analyse, compare and critically evaluate information in digital environments

- When looking for information in a specific situation, I use multiple sources for better evaluation of the search outcome.

- I check for indicators of a reliable information: author (their expertise in the subject), institution that published the information, references to other sources, time of publication, language used, users' rating, comments etc.

- I am aware of the fact that there are people who provide false information to support their purposes (e.g. fake news).

- I know basic mechanisms of search engines (how to create a search phrase, how to use keywords, why certain websites are on top of the results list).

- I am aware that the information I can access through search engine or social media platforms is dependent on key words, algorithms and my search history, therefore different users receive different information.

Media creation and communication

To be able to create and critically view media texts (film, photo, video art, posters etc.)

- I understand that media texts have their own audiovisual language and their meaning is created by using specific framing, camera angle, lighting, colour, sound and editing.

- I am aware that different forms of media expression develop subcategories and genres (e.g. cinema, TV and the web develop different genres like fiction, documentary, comedy, thriller, science fiction, live shows, reportage, commentary videos etc.) which have their own specific styles and conventions. Also that written forms have their own characteristics (e.g. writing a blog post is different than a press release, an article, an email or a Facebook post).

- I can express, discuss and share personal views about the messages of a film/video, its story, its use of visual and audio language as well as additional means of expression like music, acting, scenery etc. In this way, I can encourage a framework of argumentation and expression of different points of view among the members of a group.

- I know that media texts present a selective view of reality (e.g. a reporter or a video-maker choose whom to interview, select camera framing and, thus, reveal or hide information.

- I know that a media text reflects not only what is being presented, but also the cultural context and the time period in which the text had been created (e.g. a film about a historical hero is inevitably reflecting the film producers' opinion about this hero).

- I am aware that the screening device and environment (e.g. watch alone, or in a group, or in public) may affect the way I perceive a media text and how I want to share my views about it.

To use different media tools, equipment and applications

- I can use a variety of technical devices (set up a printer, use a video camera, set up a video game console, mobile devices etc.).

- I am able to use different software and apps that are needed for media creation projects (e.g. editing tools for photo, audio and video, office software, game design engines).

- I can create and edit information in order to communicate it through different media, taking into account their limits, benefits and needs of my target audience.

- I know how to create a presentation in different forms (blog, YouTube channel, exhibition etc.).

- I am able to solve simple technical problems or I know where to look for help when encountering a technical problem, e.g. technical forum.

To experiment with new technology and innovative media usage

- I explore new ways of creating interactive aesthetical experiences (e.g. create a interactive sound installation in the youth club).

- I experiment with coding, hardware and software and try to create meaningful links to other youth work activities.

- I see the value of remix culture and how it can be used in youth work.

Resistance and empowerment

To understand different risks associated with media use and develop appropriate strategies to stay safe

- I understand that social media can be used to exclude, bully, sexualy harass and exploit. I encourage young people to ask for help and support.

- I know it is important to question the motivations of people online, for example to avoid phishing or manipulation.

- I understand that extreme organisations promote conflict and hate to advance their political ends. I use multiple and reliable sources of information to resist such promotions.

- I know how to install and use anti virus, spam filter, encrypt communication etc.

- I am able to decide if a programme or network is safe to use.

To know that different laws and rights apply to online content (e.g. copyright, personal rights)

- I know I can't publish online images of others without their consent. I know that for minor a parent's consent is required.

- I know what free licences are and how to search for free licensed music and photos.

- I know how to credit a photo that I used in a presentation (name of the author, link to the source and licence).

To understand different business models of the media, including the role of advertising and user's tracking

- When objects with a visible brand show up in a film, I know that it's likely that the company has paid for this to happen as part of their marketing strategy.

- I know that newspapers, online as well as offline, often present sponsored content in ways that are very similar to objective reporting. I know to look out for indications that content might be sponsored.

- I know that (media) companies create web content only to get me to click on a link to go to a certain webpage, and thus earn money. I know clickbait content is most often of poor journalistic quality and is playing on curiosity and emotions.

- I know every time I click on a link, for example on Facebook, my data will be collected to be used further for marketing purposes. I know that I can find information about it in terms and conditions.

- I know what cookies or the browser history are and how I can delete them.

- I know that my location can be tracked while using my devices.

To communicate in an ethical way and follow the rules of netiquette.

- I know that it is wrong to spread hateful and prejudiced messages.

- I respect different opinions and I am open to dialogue.

- I am supportive to others and engage in a helpful way (e.g. by reporting insults or hate speech).

- I consciously choose which content can be publicly shared and which only to a specific audience.

To be able to protect privacy online

- I know that when I put something online about myself, I lose control over it. It becomes impossible to delete completely, and it could be traced back to me for a long time.

- I set up, review and adjust my privacy settings on a regular basis.

- I choose strong passwords and keep them safe and private.

To be aware of youth protection laws

- I know the media related legal youth protection obligations in my country.

- I can chose a game appropriate for my target group using PEGI labels.

- I can install filter software in order to minimise the risk of accessing harmful or dangerous content.

To participate in society through media

- I can present my opinion in a public debate (on a forum, social media group, in public consultations).

- I can gather support behind an idea, for example by setting up and promoting an online petition.
- I can use media tools to influence and activate my local community.

Understanding media usage of children and young people

To know how young people use media and what can affect their choice (e.g. age, gender, socio-cultural background)

- I know where to find research and sources of frequently collected data on media usage of young people.

- I observe children and young people using their smartphones in different situations, for example speding time with friends, studying, in a workshop.

- I talk with young people about how they use the media. I ask about their favourite websites, which YouTubers they follow, what they use their smartphones for etc.

To know where to look for information and resources on media literacy provided by practitioners or researchers

- I follow news articles, blogs about new trends in media.
- I exchange good media literacy practices with other youth and/or media literacy organisations.
- I search for new or updated training materials about media literacy and young people.

To be able to respond constructively to concerns of teachers/parents related to media

- I can suggest communication strategies that parents and teachers can use to open up discussions with young people about appropriate and inappropriate media usage.
- I know negotiation strategies designed to help young people identify appropriate limits for themselves.
- I can define the term 'addiction' and identify sources of advice and support in relation to addiction.
- I understand the term 'moral panic' and the need for a calm and reasoned approach to young people's media use.

Training skills and development

To be able to design an educational activity (eg. a workshop, a festival) on a step-by-step basis

- I can recognise existing media related abilities and competencies of my target group.
- I can choose adequate activities for my objectives.
- I can use tools and strategies for participation and engagement.
- I can prepare simple tools for monitoring and evaluation.
- I can find innovative ways to use media tools.
- I can use inspiration from other fields to develop media activities.

To update knowledge and develop skills in life long learning

- I know where to find out about new tools and applications, e.g. app stores, blogs, dedicated social media groups.
- I use online sources (e.g. tutorials, forums) when learning to use a new tool.

- I exchange experiences with other youth workers, e.g. by participating in networks.

- I participate in trainings on technical, aesthetical, educational and legal issues according to my needs.

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Information about the resource

The Standard has been created in order to identify skills, qualifications and raise the quality of youth work and training in media education field. It is result of cooperation of: Fundacja Nowoczesna Polska from Poland, JFF from Germany, Centro Zaffiria from Italy, Karpos from Greece, Ariel Trust from Great Britain and Mediawijs (imec) and Evens Foundation from Belgium. The Standard is accompanied by descriptions of best practices and educational resources.To find out more about the Standard go to http://emels.eu.

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