

Inclusion of “Cognitive Biases” in Media and Information Literacy (MIL) Teaching-Learning Resources

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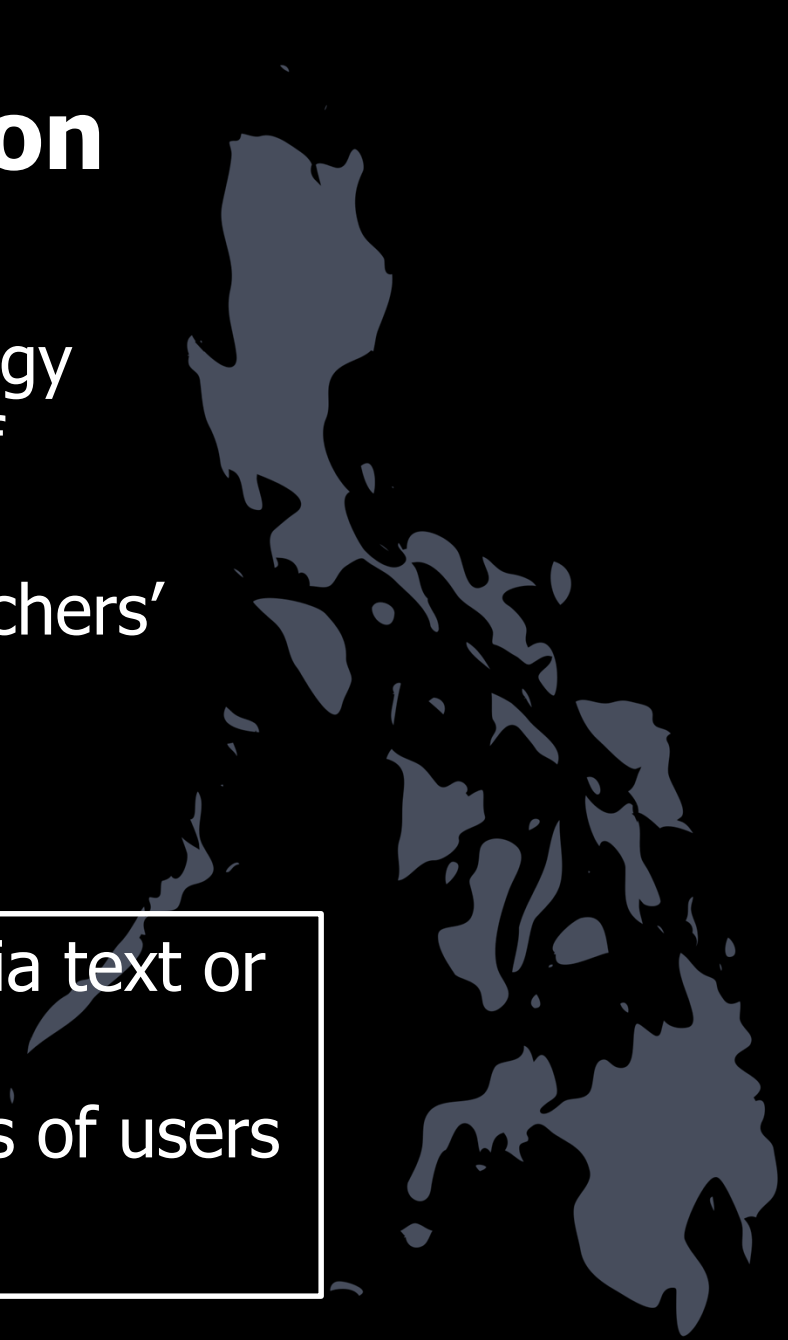
Integration of MIL in the curriculum: the MIL initiative with the widest coverage in the Philippines

MIL is a core course
in the Senior High School
program



Gaps in MIL education in the Philippines

- Focus on educational technology
 - Mass media-centric concept of “media”
 - School administrators and teachers’ lack of training on MIL
 - Lack of materials for the MIL course
- Emphasis on biases from media text or information sources
 - No mention of cognitive biases of users of media and information



Other core areas of MIL not covered in the DepEd curriculum

media representation

- awareness of stereotypes in the media and content that dehumanizes minority groups

- ability to understand other cultures and divergent views

intercultural dialogue

addressing disinformation

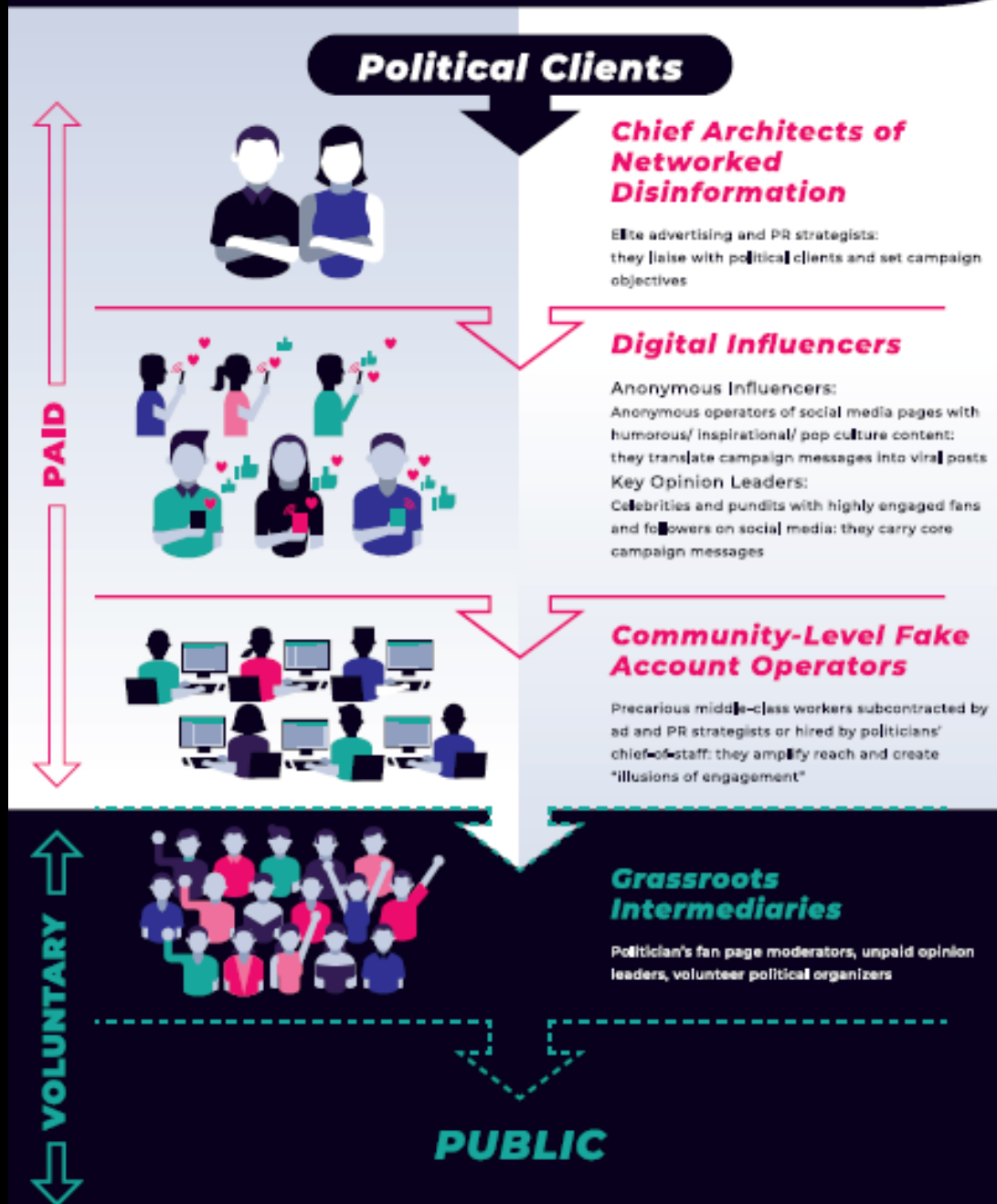
addressing disinformation

MIL skills are “all the more crucial given that **biased and polarising content** is often sophisticated and hard for verification systems to detect as it increasingly splices truth and fiction and circulates in hard-to-track formats”

(European Commission, 2018)

Architects of Networked Disinformation

“professionalized and hierarchized group of political operators” who “design disinformation campaigns” and “mobilize click armies” for political clients
(Ong & Cabañes, 2018)



Deconstructing users' biases: A gap in MIL education?

In addition to learning about biased content and disinformation, don't media and information users need to learn about how their own biases can affect the way they think and behave?

**persuasive
technology**

**trigger-action-
reward**

sense of progress

social approval

A close-up photograph of a smartphone screen displaying the Facebook login interface. The screen is blue with white text and input fields. The word 'facebook' is at the top in white. Below it are two white input fields labeled 'Email' and 'Password'. A dark blue 'Login' button is centered below the fields. At the bottom, there is a link that says 'Sign Up for Facebook' and a small blue question mark icon.

facebook

Email

Password

Login

Sign Up for Facebook

When one's feed is curated with news items that the user is likely to agree with, won't this create an echo chamber in which the user is no longer exposed to other perspectives?

Could this lead to the inability to become open to divergent views?

“Individuals empowered to screen out **material that does not conform to their existing preferences** may form virtual cliques, insulate themselves from opposing points of view, and **reinforce their biases.**”

(Alstytne & Brynjolfsson , 1996)

**“voluntary
balkanization”**

“bobotante”
(stupid voters)

“un-friending”

“unfollowing”

The next generation needs to learn how to enhance their ability to actively listen to and understand perspectives that contradict theirs, and how to engage rather than “block” or alienate others.

Exploring the Cognitive Theory of Media Literacy

(Potter, 2004)

Interaction with the media: “almost always in a state of automaticity”

(Potter, 2004)

Past

The media condition people to think that certain things are important whereas others are not

Present

The media can *also* track people's routines and preferences and use this data to influence their thoughts and behaviors

**Thus, users of media and
information need to avoid
“traps in meaning construction”
(Potter, 2004)**

**butterfly
effect**

**confirmation
bias**

**projection
bias**

If students have increased knowledge about their **own cognitive biases as users of media and information**, can this improve their media and information literacy?

Recommendations

Inclusion of “cognitive biases” in teaching and learning about MIL

Multi-disciplinary efforts in the enhancement of MIL education and research: collaboration between media and communication scholars and neuroscientists, behavioral psychologists, and experts from other social sciences