



Question what you get. Media education to fight Disinformation

Field research

Results of teachers surveys (Annex 3)

University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU), Iberika, Stimmuli, CESIE, X Liceum, Maldita.es



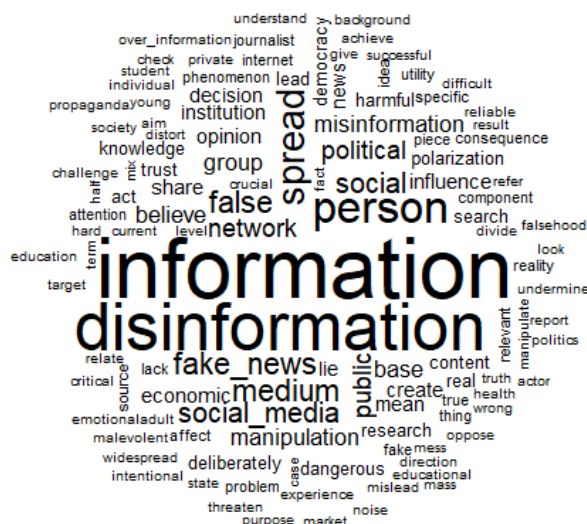
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Field research: What do we know about media literacy and disinformation?

1. What do teachers think about disinformation and media literacy?

To explore the social representation of the terms **disinformation** and **media literacy**, teachers from five different countries (Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Spain) were asked to freely express in writing the first four words that came to mind to describe these terms¹.

Figure 1. *Social Representations of Disinformation (teachers)*



Among the group of teachers who described **disinformation**, the words that appear with the highest frequency in relation to the term disinformation are: information, disinformation, person, spread, media, fake news, false, social and social media. The concept described by these words reflects a direct association of the term with information, as opposed to a more critical view found in the student population. Although disinformation is strongly associated with a type of false information,

¹ A total of 23 teachers (65,2% women, 34,7% men) were asked about **disinformation** and **media literacy** (Figure 1 and Figure 2). As the sample size is small, extrapolation of the results is limited, but the data can still be considered relevant thanks to the results obtained.

In terms of the level of agreement with the idea of **including media literacy in the educational curriculum**, both in their classes ($M = 4.11$, $SD = 1.13$) and in the educational system of their country ($M = 4.73$, $SD = 0.63$). This suggests that respondents are convinced that media literacy is needed at a national level, while they may perceive some differences or nuances in its implementation in their own classrooms. In other words, they see media literacy as a general educational need, although its implementation may vary in specific contexts.

Respondents' comments highlight the importance of preparing students for a digital environment where disinformation is a growing problem. It is mentioned that students need to develop critical thinking skills to distinguish between true and false information. As one respondent put it: "Nowadays most information is disseminated through the media, so it is very important to have the right tools to know how to read the news". On the other hand, respondents are concerned about the use of new technologies such as artificial intelligence. In this respect, "it is important to teach how to use artificial intelligence in a conscious way, rather than banning it and forcing students to use it in secret". They also highlight that young people "overuse mobile devices; they should at least develop sufficient critical thinking skills to distinguish true information from false information".

The vulnerability of students to disinformation and the role of technology in education is another issue on which the teachers surveyed expressed their views. They perceive a high level of vulnerability of their students to disinformation circulating on the Internet ($M = 4.22$, $SD = 0.75$).

In relation to this issue, they believe that the solution is not to reject technology, but to teach students how to use it correctly: "We should not reject technology but give students the tools to use it correctly [...] Use it so as not to be used". Another aspect highlighted is the ease with which young people access information without checking its veracity: "Young people have easy access to information on the web, which is their main source of education. They do not check the quality and reliability of what they find and are easily manipulated, especially on social issues". In addition, respondents mention that a lack of guidance from families can exacerbate this problem. This is evidenced by comments such as the following: "My students are born into the digital age. They should be prepared to know how to use media, but their parents may not. So, young people may not have received the right suggestions on how to read the news carefully".

Overall, respondents agree that digital literacy is essential to strengthen students' critical faculties and minimize their vulnerability to disinformation. The solution lies not in banning or restricting access to technology, but in providing educational tools that enable its responsible and conscious use.

Teacher training in media literacy and critical thinking is another need expressed by respondents, as most of them consider this training to be fundamental in the current educational context ($M = 4.36$, $SD = 0.95$).

The teachers are of the opinion that "problems related to disinformation do not only affect young people, but also teachers". This suggests that many teachers may not be adequately prepared to guide students in checking sources and critically analyzing information. A clear example of this is the following statement: "Teachers may not be sufficiently prepared to encourage critical thinking when it comes to checking sources, as they may be affected by the digital divide". In the same vein, they also stress the need for integrated digital education in the classroom that motivates students and prepares them to be responsible citizens: "Teachers should be adequately trained to teach digital access to information in schools, making learning interesting and integrated. Digital education could make students good citizens".

It is worth noting that while the respondents feel that there is a lack of preparation in their country to promote critical thinking in students, at a personal level many see themselves as competent teachers ($M = 4.0$, $SD = 1.0$). In any case, they emphasize the importance of continuous learning: “Yes, I think we should all receive continuous training in media literacy to keep us up to date”.

Similarly, the fact that the majority of respondents (52.17 %) indicate that they are not **aware of media literacy resources or tools**, compared to 39.13 % who are aware and 8.70 % not taking a position, reflects a gap in access to or knowledge of specialized tools. There is therefore a clear need for greater dissemination and training in this area, highlighting the fact that digital literacy is both a collective challenge and an individual responsibility.



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