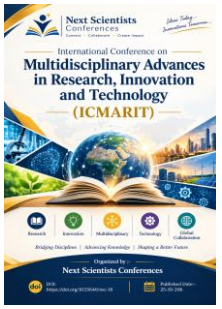
Published Date: - 30-10-2026

Page No: - 259-262



Developing Critical Media Information Evaluation Competence in the Process of Preparing Future Teachers

Omonova Muxlisa
Acting Associate Professor at Department of Pedagogy at Alfraganus University, Uzbekistan

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the pedagogical foundations of developing critical media information evaluation competence among future teachers. Particular attention is given to identifying reliable information sources, recognizing misinformation, evaluating digital content, and developing responsible information consumption practices. Using qualitative document analysis, the research examines international media literacy frameworks and scientific studies on digital information evaluation. The findings propose a competence-development framework integrating critical thinking, source verification, reflective learning, and practical media analysis. The proposed approach emphasizes the importance of incorporating media evaluation activities into teacher education programs to strengthen future teachers' professional readiness for contemporary digital educational environments.

KEYWORDS: Media literacy, future teachers, critical thinking, media information, digital competence, information evaluation, teacher education, misinformation.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technologies and online communication has significantly transformed the educational environment. Social networks, digital learning platforms, and artificial intelligence technologies provide extensive opportunities for accessing educational information. However, the increasing availability of digital content has also created challenges associated with misinformation, manipulation, and unreliable information sources.

In this context, developing critical media information evaluation competence among future teachers has become an essential component of professional preparation. Teachers must not only demonstrate the ability to distinguish reliable information from misleading content but also develop these skills among their students.

According to UNESCO, media and information literacy involves the ability to access, analyze, critically evaluate, and ethically use information across different communication environments [1]. Similarly, the European Framework for the Digital Competence of Educators emphasizes evaluating digital resources and supporting learners' responsible engagement with digital technologies [2].

The purpose of this research is to examine the theoretical foundations of critical media information evaluation competence and identify pedagogical mechanisms for its development in future teacher preparation.

The research employs qualitative document analysis to examine scientific publications and international educational frameworks concerning media literacy and digital information evaluation. Particular attention is devoted to UNESCO's media and information literacy

curriculum, the DigCompEdu framework, and empirical studies examining online information credibility [1–5].

The methodological procedure involves identifying the essential components of critical media evaluation competence, comparing instructional approaches, and developing a conceptual framework applicable to pedagogical higher education institutions.

The proposed framework considers cognitive, analytical, evaluative, and reflective dimensions of competence development. Since the research is theoretical, its findings represent pedagogical recommendations rather than results obtained through an independent educational experiment.

The analysis indicates that critical media information evaluation competence should be understood as an integrated professional ability encompassing information verification, recognition of manipulative content, evidence-based reasoning, and responsible information sharing.

One important component is the ability to identify the credibility of digital information sources. Future teachers should learn to examine authorship, publication context, institutional affiliation, supporting evidence, and possible conflicts of interest. McGrew and colleagues demonstrated that students frequently experience difficulties evaluating online sources and distinguishing credible information from misleading claims [3].

An effective pedagogical strategy involves introducing practical verification tasks into teacher education courses. For example, students may receive an online claim stating that a particular teaching method guarantees successful learning outcomes. They must investigate the original source, compare the statement with relevant scientific research, and determine whether sufficient evidence supports the claim.

Another important mechanism is lateral reading, which involves examining information about a website through independent external sources instead of relying exclusively on its internal content. Wineburg and McGrew established that professional fact-checkers used this approach more effectively than other participant groups when evaluating unfamiliar digital information [4].

The development of analytical competence also requires recognizing emotional manipulation, misleading headlines, selective presentation of statistics, and visual misinformation. During classroom activities, future teachers can compare different media representations of the same educational issue and explain how language, images, and information selection influence interpretation.

A further component involves reflective evaluation. Students should explain why they consider particular information credible and identify the reasoning behind their conclusions. For instance, after examining contradictory information about educational technologies, they may prepare a reflective report describing the verification process and the evidence influencing their final judgment.

Kulju and colleagues found that prospective teachers experienced difficulties justifying the credibility of online information about learning styles, demonstrating the importance of developing evidence-based evaluation skills during professional preparation [5].

Based on these findings, a conceptual framework integrating source verification, analytical interpretation, independent judgment, and reflective assessment is proposed. Its

implementation may involve problem-based assignments, collaborative fact-checking, digital portfolios, and guided discussions.

The proposed framework demonstrates that critical media information evaluation competence extends beyond technical digital literacy. Although future teachers may possess advanced technological skills, these abilities do not automatically guarantee effective assessment of information credibility.

Consequently, teacher education programs should integrate systematic instruction in evaluating digital evidence, recognizing misinformation, and explaining information-related decisions. Such preparation can support teachers in selecting reliable educational materials and establishing responsible digital communication practices.

Practical assignments should encourage independent investigation rather than passive acceptance of information. McGrew's research on civic online reasoning demonstrated that targeted instructional activities could improve students' abilities to evaluate digital content [6]. This suggests the potential value of explicit verification strategies in pedagogical training.

Nevertheless, successful implementation requires accessible digital resources, appropriately prepared university instructors, and transparent assessment criteria. Evaluation should consider the quality of evidence, reasoning accuracy, identification of uncertainty, and ability to justify conclusions.

The effectiveness of the proposed framework should subsequently be examined through empirical research involving future teachers from different educational institutions.

Developing critical media information evaluation competence represents an important priority in preparing future teachers for contemporary educational practice. The integration of source verification, analytical thinking, reflective assessment, and practical media analysis creates opportunities for strengthening professional digital competence.

The proposed conceptual framework emphasizes the importance of developing independent judgment and responsible information practices throughout pedagogical training. Its systematic application may contribute to preparing teachers capable of critically evaluating digital educational resources and fostering media literacy among their students.

Further empirical investigations are necessary to determine its effectiveness in different teacher education environments.

References

1. Media and Information Literate Citizens: Think Critically, Click Wisely! / A. Grizzle, C. Wilson, R. Tuazon [et al.]. – Paris: UNESCO, 2021. – 403 p.
2. Redecker C. European Framework for the Digital Competence of Educators: DigCompEdu / ed. Y. Punie. – Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2017. – DOI: 10.2760/159770.
3. McGrew S., Breakstone J., Ortega T., Smith M., Wineburg S. Can Students Evaluate Online Sources? Learning from Assessments of Civic Online Reasoning // Theory & Research in Social Education. – 2018. – Vol. 46, No. 2. – P. 165–193. – DOI: 10.1080/00933104.2017.1416320.
4. Wineburg S., McGrew S. Lateral Reading and the Nature of Expertise: Reading Less and Learning More When Evaluating Digital Information // Teachers College Record. – 2019. – Vol. 121, No. 11. – P. 1–40. – DOI: 10.1177/016146811912101102.

5. Kulju P., Hämäläinen E. K., Mäkinen M., Räikkönen E., Kiili C. Pre-service Teachers Evaluating Online Texts about Learning Styles: There Is Room for Improvement in Justifying the Credibility // Frontiers in Education. – 2024. – Vol. 9. – Art. 1451002. – DOI: 10.3389/feduc.2024.1451002.
6. McGrew S. Learning to Evaluate: An Intervention in Civic Online Reasoning // Computers & Education. – 2020. – Vol. 145. – Art. 103711. – DOI: 10.1016/j.compedu.2019.103711.