

Media and information literacy competences in the workplace: social practices and workers' empowerment in the context of distant collaborative activities.



Valéria LIGURGO
Université catholique de Louvain (BELGIUM)
Groupe de Recherche en Médiation des Savoirs (GRéMS)

WHY STUDYING MEDIA COMPETENCES AT WORK?

The spreading of **information and communication technologies** (ICT's) in a digital era implies **new ways of working together**.

2 growing phenomena in knowledge societies are worth investigating: **teleworking** and **remote collaboration**.

Interests in investigating how new media use modifies:

- **knowledge, skills and attitudes** [Bourg et al, 1989]
- **media and information literacy competences**
- **distant collaborative practices**

MEDIA & INFORMATION LITERACY COMPETENCES

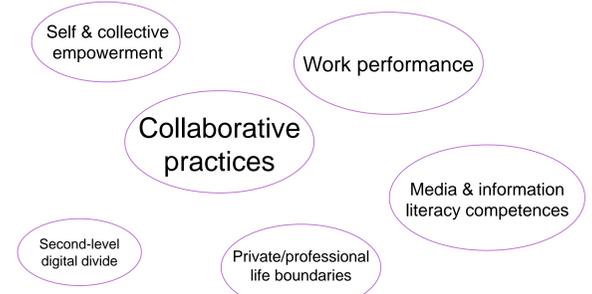
The work-related competences are sets of interrelated informational, technical and social competences [Fastrez & De Smedt, 2012] that form a subset of the individual's digital and media literacy.



OUR MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION IS:

- (1) **How can we define the media literacy competences** that are called for and developed by ICT-supported teamwork practices, (2) how they **foster cooperative practices** and (3) how they affect workers' **empowerment** ?

WHICH ISSUES ARE ADDRESSED WITH THIS RESEARCH?



WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE INFORMATION LITERATE?

In the 70s: properly use information focusing on problem-solving and efficient decision-making. [Behrens 1994].

→ **At the workplace**: to operate one's workload efficiently while struggling with information technologies [Bruce, 1999].

Researchers highlight the need to **overtake this vision**:

- Also consider the context and the roles of the social actors involved in the information mechanisms in the workplace. [Kirton & Barham, 2005]
- Being a competent worker means to successfully interact with the "information related activities that will connect workers to modalities of information, which reflect the specific and situated knowledge that is constructed by people working in consort with one another" [Lloyd, 2011].

METHOD(S) AND RESEARCH TOOLS?

- **10 case studies** among public and private (60 workers in total)
- **semi-structured in-depth interviews** including a guided tour [Malone 1983] of workers' personal workspace
- **ethnographic observations** of the work environment (connective ethnography [Leander, 2008])

EXPECTED FINDINGS

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

document the competences of the users in order to identify how to facilitate or support their development

Research effort:

- definition of the digital media and information competences related to teamwork and distant work;
- articulate these competences with technology-supported collaborative practices;
- identify competence indicators.

Resource for professionals:

- provide indicators and landmarks about necessary competences for workers in changing work environments.

Resource for political actors:

- developing educational and training initiatives designed to foster workers' employability and empowerment.

MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY, WORKERS' EMPOWERMENT AND AUTONOMY

2 models in tension

1) democracy, participation and active citizenship **VS** knowledge economy, competitiveness and choice. [Livingstone 2008]

→ **At the workplace:**
emancipation >< employability

2) gap between media literacy ambitions **VS** the implementations of digital literacy policies [Buckingham 2009].

→ **At the workplace:**
compliance >< inventivity

AN INTERVIEW GUIDE BASED ON 11 TECHNOLOGY-SUPPORTED COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITIES

1. Authoring a document collectively;
2. Sharing a collection of documents;
3. Managing outgoing information;
4. Managing incoming information;
5. Using others to find information;
6. Making collective decisions
7. Managing one's tasks in relation with others;
8. Planning a meeting;
9. Planning the team's activity;
10. Working synchronously in the distance with other team members;
11. Organizing one's workspaces for collaboration.

AND 8 DIMENSIONS...

1. Task management
2. Time management
3. Space and distance management
4. Information management
5. Awareness
6. Collective decision making
7. Reflexive tool use
8. Comprehension of "sociomatics"

