This book offers a systematic study of media education in Latin America. As spending on technological infrastructure in the region increases exponentially for educational purposes, and with national curriculums beginning to implement media related skills, this book makes a timely contribution to new debates surrounding the significance of media literacy as a citizen’s right. Taking both a topical and country-based approach, authors from across Latin America present a comprehensive perspective of the region and address issues such as the political and social contexts in which media education is based, the current state of educational policies with respect to media and organizations and experiences that promote media education.

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Media literacy is now established by UNESCO as a human right, and the field of media literacy education is both growing and diverse. The series speaks to two recurring concerns in this field: What difference does media make to literacy and how should education respond to this? Research and practice has aimed to protect against negative media messages and deconstruct ideology through critical thinking, developing media literacy through creative production and a social participatory approach which focuses on developing active citizens to play a constructive role in media democracy.

This series is dedicated to a more extensive exploration of the known territories of media literacy and education, while also seeking out ‘other’ cartographies. As such, it encompasses a diverse, international range of contexts that share a conceptual framework at the intersection of Cultural Studies / Critical Theories, (New) Social Literacies and Critical Pedagogy. The series is especially interested in how media literacy and education relates to feminism, critical race theory, social class, post-colonial and intersectional approaches and how these perspectives, political objectives and international contexts can ‘decenter’ the field of media literacy education.

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1 The state of media education in Latin America

Julio-César Mateus, Pablo Andrada and María-Teresa Quiroz

1.1 Building Bridges, Reviewing Tales: Why a Latin American Overview?

The *Media Education in Latin America* editorial project was implemented with a two-pronged objective. The first is to offer an updated state of the development of this topic in the region, from a transnational and multi-dimensional lens. The second objective is to promote dialogue with the Anglo-Saxon world (from its publication in English), contributing to overcome language barriers that have historically impeded a more fluid and horizontal relationship between South and North.

Media education is not a new concept in Latin America. On the contrary, as Ismar de Oliveira states in Chapter 13 of this book, it has an almost 50-year history. This intellectual field has been progressively built thanks to the contribution of researchers, teachers and activists, as well as projects and organisations. However, it has not managed to turn into public policies sustained over time.

As in other contexts, Latin America has also found itself confused in the face of conceptual dispersion regarding media education. This denomination overlaps with other terms in the English-speaking world, such as media pedagogy, visual information or digital literacies; new literacies; new century skills or transmedia competencies. It also overlaps with *educomunicación* in the Latin American world. Each concept has a particular approach that disputes a place in the education agenda of these countries. In this book, we start with a wide definition of media education, conceived as a system that develops critical and creative interaction abilities between citizens and media. We use ‘media’ to refer equally to the so-called ‘mass media’ or ‘traditional media’ and to ‘new media’, digital media and information and communication technology (ICT).

Today, when excessive information availability and false news traffic openly affect democratic coexistence, the world has turned its gaze to media education as a possible way out (Bulger & Davison, 2018). It is fair to remember, however, that this demand is not new. In 1980, the famous ‘Many voices, One world’ UNESCO report pointed out that
relationships between education and communication were multiplying as a product of media expansion, especially audiovisual media:

Endowed with a greater educational value, communication generates an ‘educational environment’. While the educational system loses the monopoly of education, communication becomes itself a vehicle for and a subject of education. Meanwhile, education is an essential tool for teaching men to communicate better and to draw greater benefits from the exchanges established between them. Thus, there is a growing reciprocal relationship between communication and education.

(UNESCO, 1980, pp. 56–57)

The Grünwald Declaration of 1982, acknowledged as a foundational milestone of the media education movement worldwide, noted that ‘political and educational systems need to recognise their obligations to promote in their citizens a critical understanding of the phenomena of communication’ (UNESCO, 1982). More recently, in the Riga Recommendations on Media and Information Literacy in a Shifting Media and Information Landscape, UNESCO (2016) once again calls on its member states to ensure that MIL programmes and policy are developed as central to national and international policies designed to promote civic participation in democratic life by spreading information, knowledge, awareness and skills that will enable people to enjoy the benefits of the new communications environment.

Despite the weight of media education in UNESCO declarations and recommendations, their implementation in the world has been asymmetrical and erratic. Some countries, such as France, Great Britain, Canada, Australia and the United States have developed (with varying degrees of success) institutional projects and public policy along these lines.

The European Commission and Parliament also promote media education and discuss its teaching at schools in the educational field, and its incorporation as a task for regulatory organisms in the media field (Frau-Meigs, Vélez, & Flores, 2017). However, despite efforts, some experts are disappointed with what they feel is stagnation: ‘It’s now almost 15 years since the European-level discussion of media literacy began, and yet it seems as though most of the participants are still limbering up, and haven’t even made it to the starting block’ (Buckingham, 2018).

In Latin America, the situation is even more complex, as each country constitutes its own universe and, at the regional level, the concept has not had a major impact. This does not mean that technology has been
marginalised in schools. On the contrary, Latin America is among the most dynamic regions in terms of purchasing technology, and its efforts to overcome access gaps are prominent (Lugo, Kelly, & Schurmann, 2015). However, these actions are hardly ever supported from the approach of media education that we propose in this book; they are closer to the field of educational technology.

1.2 National Outlooks: A Multi-Dimensional Analysis Proposal

For the production of the first part of this book, wherein each country’s status is presented separately, we reference the conceptual framework proposed by UNESCO (2013) in the report entitled Global Media and Information Literacy Assessment Framework: Country Readiness and Competencies. This document indicates the importance of knowing environmental factors to evaluate the state of media education in a country (among others, its presence in curricula, the existence of appropriate policies, the level of access and use and the presence of civil organisations that promote it). In the same way, some core ideas found inspiration in the book Public Policies in Media and Information Literacy in Europe (Frau-Meigs et al., 2017), although we do not follow their quantitative methodology.

In this book, we chose an outlook that is interpretative in nature. In this context, we called upon well-known researchers from 11 Latin American countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela. The countries that are absent here should be considered in a future study. We asked each author or group of authors to develop a chapter wherein they analyse five dimensions: socio-political context, regulatory framework, social actors, teacher training and academic production. We also asked them to propose a general assessment of these dimensions as a whole. In addition, we offered them some guiding questions, which we summarise in the following Table 1.1.

1.2.1 Socio-political Context: Media Concentration and Technological Gaps

Despite the peculiarities of each national context, it is possible to find common points among the Latin American countries that form the regional scene. Regarding the socio-political context, media concentration and technological gaps stand out. Both elements are framed, in turn, by a general atmosphere of political and economic instability that includes, in the past 30 years, dictatorships; coups; returns to democracy; and, in some cases, acts by terrorist or guerrilla groups with an enormous negative impact on the social atmosphere of countries.
Latin America has one of the highest indexes in the world when it comes to media concentration. Technological convergence produced a transformation in the communication and culture industries, which facilitated the emergence of telephone companies that assumed dominant positions in the media sector, especially cable TV and later the Internet. Even at the beginning of the 20th century, the main communication groups in the region, which used to be family companies, transformed into conglomerates. This accelerated the trend toward concentration due to technological convergence. The big multimedia groups faced the challenges posed by an emerging global regulatory system, using their influence capabilities over national governments. (Becerra & Mastrini, 2017).

In addition, media concentration is related to the tendency to centralise content in urban centres, which is linked to digital network infrastructure administered by telecommunications groups. For this reason, UNESCO warned about the threats of this process: When combined with property concentration, geographic concentration also affects pluralism and diversity, as it generates a uniformity of agendas and informational contents. Concentration is perceived as ‘indirect censorship’ by international and supranational organisations such as the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. In addition, UNESCO noted that the change of laws inherited from military dictatorships was an opportunity to transform to a more plural and less concentrated media landscape (UNESCO, 2014).

**Table 1.1 Dimensions and guiding questions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Guiding questions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Socio-political context</td>
<td>What is the social and political context that explains the current state of media education in your country in the last 30 years?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulatory framework</td>
<td>How is media education addressed in the policies, regulations or official documents of your country? How is it conceptually defined and what is its application grade?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutions or social actors</td>
<td>What are the institutions or social actors (public and private) that promote media education in your country? What is their contribution? What good practices could be highlighted?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher training</td>
<td>How is media education addressed in teacher training? Are there specialised programmes in this area? What organisations offer or promote them and what characteristics do they possess?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic production</td>
<td>What academic productions (reports, scientific articles, thesis, events) exist on media education, and how are they financed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General appraisal</td>
<td>Given the above, what is your assessment of the development of media education in your country and what are the most important challenges?</td>
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The closing of the first decade of the 21st century consolidated the media sector’s metamorphosis. The connections between governments and big news media companies were altered, and new challenges linked to freedom of speech appeared. According to Becerra and Mastrini (2017), Latin America has reached a decade in the adoption of new regulations regarding activities that are convergent today, such as telecommunications and the Internet. During this period, the manner of government intervention in public space and property concentration were also reconfigured. In many countries, this allowed access to audiovisual licences to non-profit actors. Moreover, it established criteria and minimum requirements for national, independent or local content.

Regarding the status of technological access, digital coverage in the region is limited, of poor quality and expensive. Although the percentage of homes in Latin America that are connected to the Internet doubled between 2010 and 2016, more than half of the population still has no access to the Internet. The average speed is four times slower than in the OECD countries and citizens pay 43% more for service. In OECD countries, people allocate 2% of their income for acquiring an internet connection, a percentage that climbs to 10% in Latin America. On the other hand, regional figures show wide differences in access and connectivity among countries, social classes, urban and rural areas and between men and women, which places the region in a position of disadvantage in comparison to other regions. Latin American countries where investment per inhabitant is greater are also those where internet penetration in homes is higher (Cepal, 2018).

To finish illustrating the complex regional situation, it must be added that much of the technological infrastructure has been completed by the private sector, which implies an investment to obtain profitability. In addition, there are still voids in the regulation of internet services and some barriers to the distribution and allocation of the radio electric spectrum, which discourages many companies from investing (Cepal, 2018). All of this constitutes a set of indicators that frame the development of media education in this region.

1.2.2 Regulatory Framework: More Technological Discourse Does Not Mean More Media Education

In its report Global Media and Information Literacy Assessment Framework: Country Readiness and Competencies, UNESCO (2013) pointed out the importance of making visible, in nation-wide policies, the contribution of media education in the citizen education and their role in democracies. For this reason, the definitions and manners of application of regulatory frameworks from each country constitute an essential form of support. They guarantee a place for media education in the public agenda and can favourably condition its implementation.
At the regional level, political interest in incorporating a citizen rights discourse is notorious, as its verification in national constitutions is widespread. In curricular terms, there is also a growing intention to include technology in schools. However, in many cases, this incorporation has ended up being more of an imposition than a change proposal, discussed with other actors in the educational sector. This feeling of imposition has inflated demands on teachers and on their knowledge of so-called ‘digital competences’, conceived, above all, as knowledge of ICT for their teaching. As indicated in some chapters in the first part of this book, having technology in schools is not equivalent to having media education.

Regarding education policies, in the past few decades, most countries have set forth initiatives that had ICT as its core idea. These initiatives aimed at improving learning quality, the acquisition of technological abilities and the reduction of the digital gap in contexts of deep inequality. Thus, they highlighted several projects using the one-to-one model, based on massive purchases of computers or tablets and investments in connectivity (Severin & Capota, 2011). Some examples of this model are the ‘Plan Ceibal’ in Uruguay, ‘Connectar Igualdad’ in Argentina, ‘One Laptop per Child’ in Peru and ‘Um Computador por Aluno’ in Brazil. Results varied, and, in some cases, the projects were discontinued.

In addition, even when freedom of speech, information and opinion are constitutional rights in Latin America, in the field of education, training in media competences to enable different age groups to exercise them has not been a priority. An example of these competences would be children being aware of their rights as media users or having knowledge of media expressive languages. Even when most states assign an educational role to media, this is not a reality, given the lack of tradition of public media or private media that is interested in this mission on its own initiative.

On the other hand, there are educational laws and reforms being proposed in Latin American countries that seek to improve systems. Nevertheless, efforts toward media education in their media legislation are quite weak, and the role of audiovisual councils is still feeble in this task. On this point, it is interesting to highlight the generalisation of codes of protection for boys, girls and adolescents, many of which include a suggestion for the need of media education. In addition, in several countries in the region, concepts such as ‘digital literacy’ or ‘digital competences’ have been progressively incorporated, including the adoption of international definitions. These concepts, however, do not constitute parts of a comprehensive concept of media education, like the one proposed in this book.

Two particular cases are worth mentioning due to their historical development: Venezuela and Argentina. In Venezuela, since the 1980s, a legal framework and school curricula coexist and are consistent in their
investment for critical media education. In Argentina, since the 1990s, an initiative from a government promoting policy to promote a critical and reflexive attitude to media can be observed. However, the federal structure in Argentina delegates the design and launch of these policies in provinces, leading to uneven development. Nevertheless, in both cases, recent political changes have created new uncertainties and risked the continuity of these approaches.

1.2.3 Institutions or Social Actors: Disjointed, Broken and Dispersed Efforts

At the regional level, there are international organisations in the communication sector that have historically approached the relationship between communication and education. Among them, two are sponsored by UNESCO: in 1956, the Instituto Latinoamericano de la Comunicación Educativa (originally called Instituto Latinoamericano de Cinematografía Educativa, or ILCE) was created with the purpose of producing audiovisual material to improve education and the Centro Internacional de Estudios Superiores de Comunicación para América Latina (CIESPAL) was founded in 1959 to promote research and training of communicators, helping to disseminate important works in this field through its magazine, Chasqui.

From academia, the region has two other organisations that promote this line of work: the Asociación Latinoamericana de la Comunicación (ALAIC), created in 1978 as an organisation that seeks to bring the scientific community together and the Federación Latinoamericana de Facultades de Comunicación Social (FELAFACS), which has enabled communication researchers and students at Latin American universities to meet and share ideas since 1981. Both organisations address the relationship between communication and education in a sustained manner in their events and publications.

In the 1980s, the Centro de Indagación y Expresión Cultural y Artística (CENECA) was very important in Chile. The country became a Latin American model for educomunicación due to the development of the concept of active reception and the convening of two regional meetings, with participation from important Latin American communication experts.

More recently, in 2004, the Red Latinoamericana de Portales Educativos (RELPE) was created. It was fuelled by an agreement among 16 countries and was intended as a regional system to store and circulate educational content. This type of initiative could represent an opportunity to develop joint-policy frameworks among countries to promote media education. Today, however, these are the exception.

As we have noted in the previous section, many Latin American governments have begun to push digital literacy, but at the expense of media
education. To a lesser extent, in countries such as Argentina, Mexico and Uruguay, spaces for media education have been developed in state or local media. This was done through audiovisual councils which, since the turn of the millennium, have begun incorporating a concern for training audiences, especially school audiences. It is also possible to identify school programmes that encourage student critical views and expressions through the creative use of local media.

Outside of the government sphere, we find initiatives by great media companies who, in their social responsibility programmes, have set out to work with schools. Digital literacy and learning projects using media in rural schools stand out.

Finally, many specific experiences related to educating the public in cinema, working with community radio or participating in newspapers among other projects, have been mentioned in detail in the national chapters of this book. They are all the result of efforts from people and groups that seek to develop media education in their communities. Nevertheless, because of their occasionally voluntary nature or limited financial resources, these experiences are limited in space and time and do not achieve the desired impact and sustainability.

1.2.4 Teacher Training: A Key Absence

In the Paris Agenda or 12 Recommendations for Media Education, UNESCO points out in Recommendation 4 that:

To integrate media education in the initial training of teachers: Initial training of teachers is a key element of the system and must include theoretical dimensions and practical skills; it needs to be based on a good knowledge of young people’s media uses. In times of rapid change, this training must rely on institutional actions and self-training, using teaching aids that have been tested and validated by teachers and students.

(UNESCO, 2007, p. 2)

The authors of the national chapters in the first part of this book agreed on indicating the absence of teacher training in media education. For this reason, there is a shared concern among many institutions about training teachers to use ICT in person or through online resources, such as educational web portals. At the same time, we find that curricula for future teachers in this region usually contain classes with an emphasis on technology or educational IT. Media education is still an unknown field in the vast majority of countries. Some exceptions can be found in Brazil, where there are specific graduate and post-graduate programmes related to educomunicación. To a lesser degree, other countries like Argentina and Chile also offer specialisations along these lines. Another
exception is the *Ley de Educación Superior de Colombia*, which, since 2016, has highlighted the need to prepare teachers in media and information literacy. Finally, in Bolivia, textbooks about the language of the media are available for teachers.

The aforementioned actions as a whole confirm an important deficiency in teacher training. This constitutes a key element in the development of media education, as pointed out by UNESCO’s Paris Agenda (2017).

### 1.2.5 Academic Production: Educomunicación, a Tradition to Follow

For several decades, this region has contributed with important intellectual production in this field. Most countries rely on researchers, and there are several national or regional organisations (mentioned previously) that were significant in developing Latin American thought at various points. Unfortunately, this production has not managed to impact the regulatory framework or public policy projects, which have run contrary to the theoretical tradition of the region (Castro, Renés, & Phillippi, 2016, p. 20).

The development of lines of thought such as liberation pedagogy, popular communication or cultural studies allowed the acknowledgement of the concept of *educomunicación*, in several countries in the region, as their own distinctive, original contribution from the Southern region (Mateus & Quiroz, 2017). Unlike functionalism or dissemination-focused approaches that are dominant in other contexts, *educomunicación* emphasised the cultural and political dimension of the education process, as well as its inter-subjective and transformative nature. This emphasis was the result of a series of common conditions and ‘historical singularities’ in the region: military dictatorships, economic dependence, cultural imperialism, exclusion of the lower class, etc. (Barranquero, 2011).

Brazilian author Paulo Freire criticised the neutral view of education and communication processes, understanding that they are inseparable and have a political nature. In addition, he claimed that orality and media constitute parts of an individual’s culture, which is why communication and education must be understood as acts of creation and expression that seek to change the *status quo*. This theory, developed in works such as *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), had a prominent influence on Anglo-Saxon authors such as Len Masterman (1985), which he acknowledges in his classic work, *Teaching the Media*.

Uruguayan author Mario Kaplún (1992) was against the image of an isolated student, connected to a machine, which was represented many times in the educational technology discourse. According to him, this image negated the social nature of learning. To him, solitary browsing
of information highways cannot replace learning, which is essentially social. For this reason, he advocated for a dialogue-oriented presence of media in the educational process.

Another mention that is indispensable to understand *educomunicación* is that of Martín-Barbero (2006), who criticised the fact that schools had systematically refused to accept the cultural decentralisation that books are experiencing, as an intellectual core element and as exceptional instruments for access to information. Together with Freire, Martín-Barbero considered the way in which ‘mediations’ allow for understanding indispensable changes when designing learning strategies. In addition, he proposed a dialogue between schools and media, based on respect rather than prejudice, seeing media more as forms of perception than as technological devices. ²

Mexican author Guillermo Orozco and Chilean author Valerio Fuenzalida also developed valuable pedagogical proposals for the critical training of audiences. They were framed in so-called ‘reception studies’, which had a strong effect on Latin American academia. ‘Currently, critical reception is turning its gaze toward new media and, above all, toward the complex intertwining of discourses and content that audiences receive through multiple chained screens’ (Crovi Druetta & Garay Cruz, 2015, p. 317).

For popular communication, *educomunicación* meant an opportunity to call out, address social inequality and overcome the obstacles to knowledge access. From these ideas, distance education projects emerged, mainly with community radio stations. Authors such as Argentinian María Cristina Mata and Peruvian Rosa María Alfaro fuelled communication linked to community development. They understood media as ‘relationships’ rather than a set of technologies (Trejo-Quintana, 2017, p. 233). To sum up, as Omar Rincón pointed out, cited by Michael Hoechsmann in Chapter 19 of this book, ‘in Latin America, communication is more about mediations than media, more about processes than objects, and more about people than industry’.

In this framework, the contributions of regional organisations continue to be valuable in promoting the academic field of *educomunicación*. In this sense, several national research associations have allowed for the development of a line of work that materialises in university programmes (especially post-graduate), academic conferences and some scientific journals, such as *Comunicar* from Spain or *Comunicação e Educação* from Brazil. These journals have recurrently been interested in topics related to *educomunicación* or have dedicated themselves completely to the field. Moreover, in the past few years, several research funds, both private and public, have regained interest in media education, stemming from phenomena such as social media, ‘post-truth’ and ‘fake news’. This interest has allowed for the revitalisation of the field from academia and the updating of many of its objects of study.
For Delia Crovi and Luz María Garay, who were in charge of coordinating ALAIC’s *Grupo de Estudio en Comunicación y Educación*, it is worth highlighting not only the region’s rich academic production regarding theoretical propositions and empirical results but also how dispersed this production is. This leaves the tasks of, first, ‘recovering the history of *educomunicación*, its theoretical construction and empirical records’. The task entails ‘weaving together the web of studies that it has not been able to bring together yet, but which could jointly explain much of what is happening in this area’ (Crovi Druetta & Garay Cruz, 2015, pp. 329–330).

### 1.3 Critical Essays: A Research Agenda

The second part of this book puts forward a set of essays by authors who have been researching media education in Latin America for decades. These contributions can be read as a reflection that delves into various ideas expressed in this overview as well as a research agenda that plans new topics and approaches going forward. From a historical perspective, Ismal de Oliveira Soares’s chapter presents a theoretical and practical survey of this region’s main contributions to media education, stemming from well-known people, organisations and projects that we can consider landmarks in its development.

Along the same historical lines, Valerio Fuenzalida narrates the transition from the concept of ‘critical reception’ to that of ‘active reception’, valuing the cultural influence of television in social life, especially in private space. During the 1980s, active reception already promoted a more empowered view of the audience, who was not at the mercy of media manipulation but rather was capable of interpreting audiovisual texts. This interpretation is defined as intertextual and resignifying. Beginning in the 1990s, the Chilean researcher describes the changes in the understanding of children audiences and of new productions for children that leave behind behavioural premises. Thus, he proposes a constructivist reception in classrooms for children, promoting a media education that contributes to developing socio-emotional competences in girls and boys during their first years.

For his part, Michael Hoechsmann calls into question the myth of the Anglo-Saxon origin of media education and acknowledges the South–North and North–South flux of ideas, which nurtured *educomunicación*. As the Canadian author observes, the lack of reciprocity is caused by an ‘intercultural communication problem’ and ‘hegemonic short-sightedness’ on the part of English-speaking research that has not taken care of a mutual-interest relationship with Latin American *educomunicación*. In spite of this situation, he proposes an agenda of meetings and alignment between both approaches, while he recalls some historical theoretical landmarks in time.
Guillermo Orozco and José Manuel Corona analyse challenges of educational societies in the 21st century, where the central concept is no longer in teaching, but rather in learning, which is determined by communicative interchange processes. Schools do not manage to deliver quality education, and informal learning, through which people develop communicative and analytical abilities, gains relevance. According to these Mexican researchers, the questioning of current education must be understood from the intentionality of students wanting to learn and the acknowledgement that informal learning processes exist and that subjects’ mediated experiences predispose them to learn certain content. The chapter indicates communication challenges that may give an account of the identities and interest of students, while it highlights the importance of new collaborative practices that arise in a great transition of eras.

Along these lines, Carlos Scolari investigates informal learning mechanisms, reflecting on the results of a European project that involved more than 50 researchers from Europe, Colombia and Uruguay. From the theoretical approach of media ecology, his chapter discusses the need to update the definition of media literacy, keeping in mind the changes in participative culture. In addition, he encourages leaving behind the ‘victimhood’ with which many times this relationship between media and users is approached. This ‘victimhood’ has also been a characteristic of the protectionist view of media education. He concludes by expressing that to continue thinking about the media in negative terms only widens the gaps between school and extracurricular spaces. It is in these spaces where today’s children and youth develop a variety of abilities, previously unknown and disregarded by the formal educational system.

Among other challenges of media education, the Catalan researcher Joan Ferrés poses the expansion of the idea of critical awareness from the inclusion of the subconscious and the relationship with everyday praxis. He identifies four deficiencies in media education. First, he maintains that critical thinking does not guarantee that students will get involved or act from this thinking. Second, he thinks that media education must incorporate the narrations and accounts linked to entertainment and not limit itself to information and speeches. Third, he emphasises the need to understand screens as a field of interaction in which they become mirrors of individuals, rather than as something external to individuals. Finally, he poses that the concept of criticism must incorporate subconscious processes that happen when interacting with screens.

Roxana Morduchowicz deals with new literacies in teenagers especially that linked to informational competence. She encourages reviewing the literacy paradigm that is anchored in reading and writing. Concerned, she describes the many problems today’s teenagers experience while
navigating the blurry information ocean that drowns them at times as well as their difficulty to distinguish the credibility of sources. New media routines, she concludes, have been strongly eroding the way in which we consume and produce information. A high proportion of information reaches us in an indirect manner (‘incidental and partial’), i.e. not due to voluntarily searching news content, but rather mixed in with personal comments and anecdotes from the social media contacts who share this content. These contacts constitute the new editorial filters. In this outlook, there is still much to study about the way in which this consumption, plagued with ‘fake news’, affects democratic life in our countries.

1.4 Overview

From the analysis of the national chapters, we can conclude that media education has had a varied presence in national policies in Latin America and has not adequately responded to the citizen rights approach or the theoretical tradition of educomunicación.

In the last 30 years, Latin American governments have made efforts to connect schools to audiovisual media, and later with digital technologies, but from the perspective of media as teaching assistants. Even when teacher education and training programmes on technology use have been undertaken, the balance is not positive because in most of these, technological action has taken priority over pedagogical action.

When it comes to infrastructure, the number of classrooms with computers and internet has grown significantly, especially in urban areas. Despite this, ideas and practices about the relationship between the use of computers and internet and education quality are missing, as well as effective strategies to incorporate ICT in initial teacher training. Even when media education programmes insert technology under the rhetoric of digital inclusion as the path to guaranteeing citizenship and learning of children and youth, a critical view that proposes the development of communicative abilities is lacking. The case of the ‘Plan Ceibal’ in Uruguay is the best example of a coherent and continued policy when it comes to educational technology. However, it does not necessarily subscribe to the media education viewpoint.

There are public policies in the field of education that incorporate ICT as a transversal core concept. Digital literacy projects in urban and rural areas are also developed, with governmental or civil organisations in charge. However, many of these ‘educational reforms’ posed in laws and official documents repeat models that do not quite approach the media as a part of culture and the training centres around tools that we must learn to use. Along these lines, an absence of innovative processes that transform pedagogical practices from ICT is verified. Educational technology companies, endowed with significant marketing, have replaced
the ideas that many Latin American theorists provided under the emblem of educomunicación.

It is also possible to conclude that policies dealing with media education are originated in some cases by the government, but in many others, at universities and in community and regional organisations. Even when private institutions, companies and NGOs demand support from the State for improvement of educational quality for their projects, there is not always an appropriate response.

Regarding academic production, Latin American researchers disseminate their work at a reduced scale, which prevents higher visibility and dialogue with the rest of the world. This barrier was one of the motivations for producing this book.

1.5 Ten Challenges for Media Education in Latin America

Regarding future perspectives, we propose ten challenges that can guide the development of media education at different levels in the Latin American region:

1. Recognise the interest in media education in Latin America as a field of study and interdisciplinary action.
2. Recover the theoretical basis of educomunicación to update it and develop knowledge that serves public policy design in this field.
3. Understand that educational technology and media education are different issues.
4. Project media education to other audiences and spaces that transcend school as an opportunity to generate new dialogue and reflection channels among generations and groups about the impact of media in society.
5. Incorporate dynamics that are characteristic of social media and of digital literacy as part of a training centred around the person and democratic values, to face intolerant speech in social media, data control, ‘fake news’ and other issues that may endanger peaceful and respectful coexistence.
6. Encourage media education that is oriented toward confronting inequality in rural or marginalised areas, starting with their own interests and needs. It is about not only getting technology there but also guaranteeing fundamental rights to citizens that are usually disregarded, favouring their voice and their culture.
7. Rethink the teacher profile in a media environment and, from there, influence teacher training in media education at all educational levels, from its early stages.
8. Deepen the media education research path, addressing issues relevant to local contexts and linking these contributions in the framework of a global conversation.
9 Promote both public and private state educational actors to come together to develop media education policies and projects.
10 Drive national and regional media education policies, ensuring their sustainability and impact.

Notes
1 This chapter has been translated thanks to the support of the Institute of Scientific Research (IDIC) – University of Lima.
2 For a review of the validity and complementary nature of the concept of mediation proposed by Martín-Barbero and Henry Jenkins's convergence culture, see Carlos A. Scolari (2015).

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Part I

National chapters
2 Media education in Argentina. Balance and perspectives of a field under construction

Bettina Martino and Silvana Iovanna Caissón

2.1 Socio-political Context

To provide a better understanding of the context in which media education (ME) evolved in Argentina, three key moments will be considered. The first one corresponds to the years following the return to democracy in 1983; the second is related to a period of strong media concentration in the 1990s; the third, starting in 2007, is connected with initiatives to democratise communications and access to technology. An overview of the current context will be included at the end of this article.

2.1.1 Media Education at the Return to Democracy

The return to democracy in Argentina in 1983 meant the gradual end of a period characterised by censorship and restricted freedom of expression. Roxana Morduchowicz (1999) points out that this did not imply in itself the development of a democratic culture. ME was therefore devised as education for civic conscience and participation in the public sphere. This writer focusses on two aspects that are central to understanding the need for ME in our country: the degree of censorship and self-censorship prevalent during the years of the civic-military dictatorship that started in 1976; and the media coverage of the Malvinas War, which granted legitimacy to the armed conflict and failed to report the Argentine defeat. These events are a referential starting point for the formulation of actions in ME, which is also required as a result of technological advances (Morduchowicz, 2017).

Consequently, ME is organised in these years around the relationship between politics, citizenship, and communication. Media coverage and its messages in the school environment are strongly linked to the idea that no democracy is possible without freedom of speech, diversity in sources of information, and plurality of voices attaining visibility in the public sphere.

2.1.2 ME within the Framework of the Processes of Media Concentration in the 1990s

The decade of the 1990s was characterised – not only in Argentina but in all Latin America – by a sharp deepening of neoliberal policies that led
to greater inequality and a severe economic crisis. In the telecommunications sector, telephone services and the main television channels were privatised, private cable operators emerged, and media companies with foreign capitals started doing business in the country (Becerra, 2000). The media map became increasingly limited; access and participation in goods and services related to infocommunications grew progressively more restricted (Rossi, 2006).

There were, however, a few attempts to promote democratising communications, such as the initiative by a sector of society including unions, media specialists, community media, and public officials. It was aimed at reforming the broadcasting law [Ley de Radiodifusión N. 22.285] passed by the dictatorship and still in force at the time. The initiative did not succeed, but the debate was opened, asserting the need for the state to set limits to media concentration and to widen access to audiovisual media so as to include all legal persons.

This context prompted the emergence in schools of new problems and cultural practices related to the all-pervading presence of both media discourse and technological devices in young people’s lives, which had great impact on the traditional ways of teaching and learning as well as on the characteristics of the learning subject. A tension developed between media culture and school culture (Huergo, 2001); the new subjectivities and youth’s multiple literacies challenged schools as a privileged space of knowledge (Orozco Gómez, 2007).

In its beginnings, ME actions were led by a conception of media as “deformers” of reality; later it turned to questioning itself on education as well as on the consequences of living in a media culture. Moreover, it was at this stage that computer laboratories were created in schools. At first, they were operated with more than two children per computer and they were oriented to training in the handling of tools in word processing and forms (Grasso, Pagola, & Zanotti, 2017).

In the period between the end of the 1990s and the beginning of the year 2000, a large variety of texts devoted to the relationship between media and school were published, and cross-cutting ME experiences started taking place. The intersections between communication and education become a line of work and research, acquiring greater visibility in the academic field (Mata, 2000). There is a need for teacher training regarding the pedagogical use of new technologies, and Teacher Training Colleges in Communication are created in different universities across the country.

While there is still concern about the media in the educational field, it will no longer be limited to the “distortions” they produce. Instead, it will focus on the production of meaning they generate by setting up a moral order that we should be able to question (Silverstone, 2010). By the mid-1990s the pedagogical process changed gradually, and students were able to explore not only new tools but also autonomous ways to use them in their learning processes (Morales, 2015).
2.1.3 Towards Democratisation of Communications: New Ways of Thinking ME

The discussion of national communication policies reached the Argentine public sphere in the last decade. The congressional debates on Law No 26.522 of Audio-visual Communication Services [Ley de Servicios de Comunicación Audiovisual], known as the Media Law, and its passing in 2009 made it clear that the paradigm on which the old Broadcasting Law was based precluded public policies that would allow exercising the right to communicate.

Thus, the debate on the need to democratise communications and to strengthen the sector of popular media became increasingly present in the public sphere (Chiodi & Iovanna, 2014; Linares et al., 2017). A main achievement in this dispute was the acknowledgement of popular media as legal subjects in the field of public communications. Support for these participatory spaces as a cultural and political fact enabled an exponential development in communicative citizenship in Argentina (Mata, 2006).

Broader communication rights allowed the growth and multiplication of ME actions. Schools found a favourable atmosphere to carry out projects and to open work spaces that were sustainable in time.

At this point the debate is also focussed on young people’s relationship with technology, mainly because of its significance in the adult world (Morduchowicz, 2014). Together with ME comes the need for digital literacy, which includes not only students but also educators who had to be trained in the use of the new information technology tools. Many educators received training almost at the same time as their students.

ME proposals bring about the consolidation of a model that moves away from its relationship with the area of language, focussed on contents analysis, the identification of literary genres and often tied solely to the model of graphic media. These are increasingly being replaced by experimenting with audiovisual and radio material, producing individual messages, and taking advantage of new forms of communicating used by children and youths.

2.2 Regulatory Framework

Important regulatory changes took place in Argentina in the last 30 years, which had an impact on the communications contents of school curricula.

2.2.1 Federal Law of Education

The Federal Law of Education [Ley Federal de Educación 24.195] was passed in 1993. According to the new law, the stages of the education system were restructured, the scope of compulsory primary education was extended, and curricular contents were renewed.
This is the first time that cross-cutting and specific communication contents are explicitly mentioned, since the law states that Polymodal Education should promote the development of a reflexive and critical attitude towards messages in the media.

The model implemented was a decentralised one: while the state was still in charge of technical-pedagogical orientation, it left the responsibility for financing and for developing education policies to the provinces, within the guidelines established centrally. It is for this reason that the development of actions in ME has been heterogeneous and uneven, with different degrees of priority and depth of contents.4

ME is introduced in the EGB through contents included in the different knowledge areas: from the area of Language to that of Mathematics, as well as those of Physical Training, and Natural and Social Sciences. The aim is to develop competencies related to critical reading, information analysis and interpretation, knowledge of genres and formats, and the possibilities of using tools and technologies for individual expression.

Similarly, an area of specialisation oriented to Communication, Arts, and Design was created within the Polymodal Level, which included subjects specific to the field of communication. However, they were approached from an artistic perspective focussed on technical-professional and instrumental training, rather than on an analytical or reflexive one (Carduza, Mistrorigo, & Rubinovich, 2011, p. 72).5

It is difficult to ascertain the extent to which new policies have been effectively adopted and incorporated in the design of curricula in each jurisdiction and how much has been put into practice in the actual work in classrooms and schools. It is, however, possible to state that ME is here to stay and expand.

2.2.2 National Education Law

By the end of the 1990s, because of the strict application of neoliberal policies, the country was immersed in a social, political and economic crisis, which resulted in President Fernando de la Rúa’s resignation in 2001. Increased dropout and repetition rates, as well as the fact that the school had become an environment of material and affective support, made the need for an educational reform a central issue in the debate.

During Néstor Kirchner’s administration, a debate started around a project to reform education that was discussed in the schools and analysed in pedagogical-institutional symposiums. The outcome of the debates was the passing of law 26.206, the National Education Law [Ley de Educación Nacional]. It included, among other features, a new school structure,6 and it made secondary schooling compulsory.
The Law deals much more explicitly with the need for ME and the closing of the digital gap. Among other objectives, it includes the development of skills for the handling of languages produced by information and communication technologies. It also states the need to reach a commitment from the media as regards their responsibility for contents and values transmitted, as well as their acknowledgement of their educational task outside the school environment.

No objectives were defined related to ME for the initial level, which were stated, however, for the Primary and Secondary Levels. The law mentions the creation of conditions for the handling of New Information and Communications Technologies (NICTs), the production and critical reception of media discourse, and the intelligent and critical use of new languages produced in the field of information and communication technologies.

Article 88 states that “Access and command of information and communication technologies shall be part of the curricular contents which are essential for an inclusion in the knowledge society”. Similarly, title vii of the law bears the heading “Education, new technologies and means of communication”. This has been described as an unprecedented situation and as a sign of the importance this issue should be granted in schools (Nigro, 2008).

The interesting aspect of National Education Law is the commitment made by the Executive through the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology regarding the development of education policies to include the use of technologies of the Communication and Information Sciences (infocom). Similarly, mass media were created to promote the objectives of the Law. Both the Educ-ar website and the Encuentro television channel were created before the passing of Law 26.522 of Audiovisual Communication Services [Ley de Servicios de Comunicación Audiovisual] but within the context of the debate on the right to democratic and pluralistic communication.

The National Education Law promotes a wide and critical perspective of ME; it includes involvement with diversity and cultural difference, highlights the situation of underrepresented subjects, and emphasises the possibility of expression through individual production.

As for specialisations in the Secondary Level, the Law included a specific path oriented to Communication, which had a remarkable frame of reference for the setting up of the curriculum.

In 2014 a new reform process was started throughout the country. In accordance with the New Secondary School, specialisations were modified and so were the contents of their specific subjects. The diversity of specialisations was reduced; Communication, though still valid, was left out of the curriculum in many schools. In most jurisdictions, spaces for the development of ME were cut down, as well as financing for special programmes and for the maintenance of technological resources and infrastructure.
2.2.3 Law of Audiovisual Communication Services [Ley de Servicios de Comunicación Audiovisual]

The Law of Audiovisual Communication Services (LSCA) was passed in 2009. It meant an important step towards democratising communications and had real impact on the field of education, since it included articles designed to protect and widen the communication rights of children and adolescents.

On the one hand, it created the Advisory Council on Audiovisual Communication and Childhood [Consejo Asesor de la Comunicación Audiovisual y la Infancia], intended to promote the production of specific contents in accordance with the rights of childhoods in mass media. On the other hand, it created the Office of the Ombudsman for the Public of Audiovisual Communication Services [Defensoría del Público de Servicios de Comunicación Audiovisual], an autarkic agency whose objective was to guarantee the publics’ rights.

Similarly, it granted – through direct awards – authorisations for the use of broadcasting signals to broadcasting stations operating in national universities and public university institutes, and to primary and secondary schools as well. It ruled the provision of specific space and equipment to allow students’ participation and the production of contents with students’ voices.

The Federal Authority of Audiovisual Communication Services [Autoridad Federal de Servicios de Comunicación Audiovisual] (AFSCA) granted – through direct awards – 280 FM radio licences to schools, and another ten to national universities (Espada, 2017). The Ministry of Education supported the growth and sustainability of these new radios through the Programme of School Radios [Programa de Radios Escolares], which was instrumental in the provision of the necessary equipment, and the National Programme of Educational Extension – Youth Activities Centre [Programa Nacional de Extensión Educativa – Centro de Actividades Juveniles] (CAJ), which hired educators in radio skills and project coordinators.

In December 2015, six years after the implementation of the LSCA – with rights and wrongs, plus delays in management mechanisms – President Mauricio Macri issued three executive orders promising to pass a regulatory law on converging processes of telecommunications and audiovisual communication services as a whole. Thus began a new stage in media policies in Argentina. New conservative state policies, oriented to protecting private enterprises and discouraging competition, enabled concentration in infocommunications (Mastrini & Becerra, 2017).

Starting in 2016 the aforementioned experiences began facing serious difficulties regarding their sustainability. At present, both School Radios and CAJs lack financing; in many cases, they are no longer operating. Similarly, it has become hard to sustain programming. Since the radios
are located in schools, they do not have the necessary staff to guarantee the broadcasts ruled by article 150 of the LSCA, which requires compliance with a 60% in-house production quota in the programming schedule.

2.3 Institutions or Social Actors

2.3.1 “School and Media” and “Connect Equality Programme”

It is our argument that the Argentine Ministry of Education was a key actor through the creation and implementation of several programmes, in particular those called “School and Media” and “Connect Equality”.

The “School and Media” nationwide programme was created in the year 2000 with the objective of implementing ME actions by analysing the way the media reflect reality and how they influence people's perceptions. It seeks to motivate dialogue between the school, the media, technology and youths as a result of understanding the new info-communicational context. It works together with different actors in the cultural universe and promotes actions to raise families’ awareness on media issues and to train educators. The activities of the “School and Media” programme included, among other things, the publishing of booklets on different subjects (Internet in the Family – How to Guide Children in the Use of the Internet), the organisation of competitions and festivals (School, camera... action, Journalists for one day), and the creation of media products (RE Magazine, Radio Dreams television programme).

The “Connect Equality” programme was started in 2010 within the framework of the National Education Law [Ley de Educación Nacional] passed in 2006. Under its guidelines, a classmate type computer was given to each student and educator in the secondary level. In the City of Buenos Aires, they were also distributed in some primary schools. The computers could be used both in schools and at home. The programme brought about the need for creating digital contents and introducing new ways of teaching and learning based on the use of technologies. It also required not only adapting the infrastructure of schools but also implementing training for educators (Lago Martínez, & Cols, 2012).

The netbooks also served as a platform for the creation of sound, graphic, and audiovisual products by the students. However, the programme faced some difficulties, such as connectivity problems, technical failures, and delays in repairs as well as the limited use that some educators made of them as tools to transform pedagogical practices.

For a large sector of the young population, the programme meant having a computer at home for the first time. The netbooks were given uses
that far exceeded school objectives; they contributed to the development of knowledge and skills, educational inclusion and the reduction of the digital gap.

As from 2016, the programme began losing support and it was replaced by “Learning in Connection”, which is intended to guarantee digital literacy and focuses mainly on robotics and programming, besides the inclusion of such technologies in the teaching-learning processes.

### 2.3.2 Youth Activities Centres

Youth Activities Centres (CAJs) were created within the framework of the National Program of Educational Extension, which depended on the National Directorate of Socio-Educational Practices. They were defined as experiences whose formats and schedules were different from those of schools and classrooms and were destined to promote greater youth participation in educational experiences related to their interests.

Implementing a CAJ in a school meant formulating a socio-educational project in accordance with the Institutional Educational Project [Proyecto Educativo Institucional]. One of the orientations offered was “Communication and New Technologies”, which promoted the production of graphic, radio, and audiovisual material by its young participants. A noteworthy experience was the Network of School Radios CAJ [Red de Radios Escolares CAJ], where a large amount of graphic and sound material for training and for the access to and participation in a communication medium was developed.

### 2.3.3 Office of the Ombudsman for the Public of Audiovisual Communication Services

The Office of the Ombudsman for the Public of Audiovisual Communication Services [Defensoría del Público de Servicios de Comunicación Audiovisual] was central to the promotion of ME. Since its creation six years ago it has carried out numerous unprecedented experiences in the field of communication and education. The area of training and promotion works with public schools on participation and public education techniques, devising educational strategies for the development of audiovisual products where students are the main participants. They also organise training workshops for educators from all levels, where they provide work strategies for the classroom. The materials developed by the agency are not only free; they are also available on its webpage (https://defensadelpublico.gob.ar/).

One of the agency’s most significant recent experiences is the production of a daily news broadcast and an audiovisual news programme developed entirely by students. “Youth on the Air” [Aire Joven] is a radio programme that coordinates various public-school radio workshops.
Students have the opportunity to question and discuss the ways in which they are represented, and to spread their ideas nationwide.

Along the same lines, Barricada TV, an alternative television station in the City of Buenos Aires, together with Giramundo TV, in the province of Mendoza, produced “Free Period TV” [Hora Libre TV], an informative-magazine type programme. In this project students get to use their voices and the cameras to address the viewers in order to talk about and to show their experiences in schools and neighbourhoods, give their opinions on subjects of their interest, and show their skills and the things they like to do.

Besides, the Office of the Ombudsman offers workshops to social organisations and community and popular media. These are intended to promote responsible communication regarding the rights of children and youths, women’s rights, as well as issues like groups of sexual dissidence, disability and mental health, diverse masculinities, among others.

Since December 2016 the agency has had no officials at its head. The staff has been much downsized, and the current budget reduced significantly. They are unable to implement new projects or open new areas of activity.

### 2.3.4 National Universities

National Universities, with its Schools of Social Communication, their educators and students, and the organisations that bring them together (Network of Schools of Social Communication and Journalism-Redcom and Argentine Federation of Schools of Social Communication-Fadeccos), are a central actor in the development of ME. We will deal with their participation in greater detail when we discuss academic production, but we wish to point out the growth of the Communication/Education area, not only in terms of the production of knowledge, but also as the spaces for the training of educators, the creation of extension projects, the organisation of seminars, graduate courses and congresses, the development of intervention strategies and the development of undergraduate as well as graduate theses, among others.

As of 2010, RedCom also has a Network of Chairs as well as teams of Research and Intervention in Communication and Education, which organises work and exchange meetings intended for reflection and for the proposal of lines of action.

### 2.4 Teacher Training

The introduction of communication contents in the school curriculum cannot be considered in itself a policy of ME. In fact, it was carried out without any guidelines or prior debates regarding what was to be taught or how (Gamarnik, 2010).
The creation of Teacher Training Colleges in Communication \textsuperscript{11} started in the late 1990s both in state and in private universities. The curricula included aspects dealing with didactics; the use of technologies in the classroom; contents related to sociology and to the theory of education; education policies; and, in some cases, specific reading material on ME by well-known authors in European and Latin American spheres. The relevance of such colleges can be seen not only in the high levels of enrolment, but also in the fact that provincial education officials have granted recognition to their degrees. Their growth resulted in the formation of the Network of University Teachers in Social Communication (ProUn-Cos). Besides developing lines of action, the Network is intended to deal with aspects related to accreditation and curriculum design and with the status of ME in the provinces.

The state, on the other hand, promotes activities oriented to the training of educators in this area. In 2007, the National Institute for Teacher Formation (INFoD) was created, following the guidelines of the National Education Law. The Institute offers courses and specialisations in distance learning as well as in virtual and semi-online modalities. Among its proposals, there is a pedagogical curriculum (for secondary school teachers without a teacher training degree). There are also courses related to the use of ICTs in schools.

Similarly, institutions devoted to the formation of social communicators include subjects related to the articulation between Communication and Education, and the use of ICTs as teaching tools.

Finally, it must be noted that many universities in the country offer different proposals for formation as well as degrees (both undergraduate and graduate) related to educational communication; communication, technologies and multimedia developments for educational needs; and the relationship between education, communication and the media; among other issues. The National Universities of Rosario, Córdoba, La Plata, General San Martín, Entre Ríos, and Buenos Aires are some of the universities that promote this type of formation.

### 2.5 Academic Production

Academic production in the field of Communication/Education increased towards the late 1990s as a result of the context described in the preceding points. María Cristina Mata (2000) pointed out at the time that the number of meetings, publications, and productions in the area of Communication/Education reflected its exponential growth.

A review of the available programmes and minutes of the congresses held annually by RedCom and Fadeccos as of 2008 makes it possible to observe the presence of thematic focusses and presentations under the heading of Communication and Education. On numerous occasions a third term is added related to educational technologies,
public policies, new subjectivities, the professional formation of communicators, school and community experiences, youth media consumption, media and informational literacy. The National Network of Researchers in Communication [Red Nacional de Investigadores en Comunicación] and several research and intervention teams in Communication/Education have also organised congresses with special emphasis on this area.

There is an interesting volume of academic production which is the result of research carried out in universities and at the National Scientific and Technical Research Council [Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas] (CONICET). The CONICET repository contains works on the issues of communication and information as well as status reports and descriptions of experiences and projects and of educators’ and students’ practices.

There is also a number of digital magazines specialised in subjects that articulate communication and education, as well as communication, education and technologies, such as Notes on Communication and Education and Discourse [Apuntes de Comunicación, Educación y Discurs], published by the National University of La Plata or Virtuality, Education, and Science [Virtualidad, Educación y Ciencia], published by the National University of Córdoba. Articles on issues of communication and education also appear in Argentine generic magazines.

Finally, we should mention Argentine researchers, very prestigious in the field, whose opinion is sought after both in our country and abroad: Daniel Prieto Castillo, Jorge Huergo, Roxana Morduchowicz, Cora Gamarnik, Silvia Bacher, Eva Da Porta, and Magalí Catino.

2.6 General Appraisal

ME in Argentina has gone through various stages and contexts. This process has been accompanied, to a greater or lesser extent, by regulations that have included new socio-cultural practices and required institutional and professional updating.

There was a gradual strengthening of the field of intersection between communication and education as experiences and practices were generated in schools and organisations but also as training and research in these areas were institutionalised, promoting the creation of didactic and pedagogical tools to enrich teaching practices.

An analysis of curricula and of some educational experiences in our country has shown that communication in schools was conceived, at first, as an analytical tool, and later as a means of production and expression, related to the traditional communication media. However, the use of ICTs in recent years has challenged instrumental teaching, as it questioned the role of institutions as the only space for legitimate knowledge.
At the same time, the debate on the LSCA and its passing made it clear that communication is a human right. Although the articulation of the Law with the educational system generated concrete experiences, it opened a truly new theoretical-political perspective in schools.

How can this right be put into practice among students? What is the impact of the convergence of communication and education – in technical, political and economic terms – on their cultural consumption? How can they, in such context, access communication media – mass, community, school, and popular – and participate in them? These questions are the challenges that schools will have to deal with as it is faced with recent processes, which imply new ways of relating to one another, new ways of being, and new ways of inhabiting a world that is expanding towards virtuality.

The shift towards the digital era is overwhelming, and students’ practices evolve at the same pace as these changes: permanent consumers and anonymous producers. What happens outside the school has to be incorporated, not only as a space for reflection and critical reading of the media, but as a productive space related to what students think, feel and perform on the basis of new codes.

Networked pages and platforms, video games with worlds so unreal that they become liveable, relationships that are so encoded that they might end up in harassment, cyberbullying, memes that go viral, troll strategies, life through images and emoticons replacing words to talk about what is happening to us. How many likes make up school life? How free are we on the net? The autonomy children and youths have acquired in the use of ICTs seriously challenges the school.

It is necessary, therefore, that we ask ourselves where we are and where we are going in the field of ME. Academic growth has been remarkable and enjoys nowadays a well-earned legitimate place at teacher training colleges and universities. This is then our most important resource if we do not want to lose our way. Enhancing research on education is essential, not only from the point of view of documentary analysis but also as reflection based on practices of communication and culture.

The state must perform a central role by developing educational policies that reflect the evolution of society, with proactive contents and a sound implementation. It is vital to have access to permanent financing for education so as to ensure the sustainability of programmes and projects, and promote research for transformation in education. The experiences we have mentioned in this article like “Education and Media”, “Connect Equality”, “Encuentro Television Channel”, Youth Activities Centres with radio and television in schools are clear examples of such initiatives and policies.

Finally, we suggest a greater challenge: considering ME as an interdisciplinary field whose epistemological and political development will allow the building of knowledge that contributes to the development of public policies guaranteeing civil rights.
Notes

1 Some of the participating actors were Coalición por una Radiodifusión Democrática, Red de Carreras de Comunicación (RedCom), Foro Argentino de Radios Comunitarias (FARCO), Red Nacional de Medios Comunitarios (RNMA), Central de Trabajadores de la Argentina (CTA), Asociación de Trabajadores del Estado (ATE), Red Par, AMARC, Secretaría de DDHH de la Nación, Programa Juana Azurduy, and Comunicación del Archivo Nacional de la Memoria, among many others. Becerra, Marino and Mastina (2010) point out that the articles in the law, passed by a wide majority, reflect most of the 21 items proposed by civil society organisations, which are considered essential for a democratic social communication.

2 Comunicación/Educación: ámbitos, prácticas y perspectivas and Cultura Escolar, Cultura mediática/ Intersecciones, both by Jorge Huergo y María Belén Fernández published in 1997 y 2000 respectively; La escuela y los medios: un binomio necesario y A mí la tele me enseña muchas cosas, by Roxana Morduchowicz, 2000 and 2001, respectively; La comunicación en la educación, by Daniel Prieto Castillo in 2002; Estrategias para explorar los medios de comunicación by Gustavo Mórtola in 2004; Escuela, medios de comunicación social y transposiciones by Gabriela Carbone in 2004, to mention but a few.

3 The law establishes a new structure formed by: Basic General Education Level [Nivel de Educación General Básica] (EGB), divided into three cycles of three years each of which are mandatory by law; the “Polymodal” Level, which also lasts three years with emphasis on different areas, such as Communication, Arts, and Design. The complete structure covered 12 years of schooling, just like the current one.

4 At present, the province of Mendoza is the only one whose curriculum features a subject called Social Communication. It was created in 1998 and must be taught in either the first or the second year of the Secondary Level.


6 The Law went back to the previous structure: Initial Level (two tears), Primary Level (five years), and Secondary Level (five years and six tears in technical schools). The Secondary level featured areas of specialisation.

7 State society responsible for the Internet official education portal of the Ministry of Education of Argentina. It has operated since 2003 as a free access bank of materials and information for educators of all curricular instances and students of all levels.

8 Open Digital Television Channel granted to the Ministry of Education in 2007 to broadcast educational material oriented to the general public but to educators and to students. It was removed from the orbit of the Ministry of Education in 2016.


10 In 2016, 70 workers of the National Plan of Digital Educational Inclusion were laid off and the Plan’s budget for 2017 was reduced by $1200 million. Eighty per cent of the jurisdictions were forced to reduce or write off their technical-pedagogical teams. The distribution of netbooks went down from 600 000 in the original plan to 100 000. Source: http://www.nuestrasvoces.com.ar/investigaciones/desmantelar-igualdad/
We are using this expression in a general sense; these teacher training colleges take different names across the country. Besides, some of them were created as university careers and others as undergraduate educational cycles. Many of them responded to the labour needs of graduates from the careers in Social Communication who held teaching positions in schools.

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3 Media education in Bolivia. Some advances and the need for comprehensive proposals

René Zeballos

3.1 Socio-Political Context

According to the estimate of the National Institute of Statistics (INE, 2018) of Bolivia, there would be something more than 11 million inhabitants in the country. The “National Opinion Survey about Information and Communication Technologies (ITC)”, carried out by the public entity Agency of Electronic Government and Information and Communication Technologies (AGETIC) at the end of 2016, establishes that 67.5% of national citizenship over 14 years old is Internet user. Of this proportion, 51% are men, and 49% are women.

Other data provided by this study, which generally characterize, in a general way, those who are linked to these technologies, express that 95% integrated into the Internet use social networks, 14% have Internet at home and 95% use the cell phone to navigate. Sixty-two percent are in the capital cities, 21% are in intermediate locations and only 17% are in rural populations. Thirteen percent say they do not connect to the Internet because there is no service where they live.

Regarding availability, 95% of the Internet user population has a television set, 93% cell phone, 82% radio and 42% computer. Further, 84.5% is informed by television, 47.5% by radio, 32.5% by printed newspapers and an average of 29.5% by social networks. The media seen as the fastest in providing information are television for 46%, social networks for 28%, web pages for 12%, the radio for 8%, digital newspapers for 3% and the printed newspapers for 2%. This coincides with the data in which it is revealed that digital sites are not widely used to gather journalistic information.

About the citizen capacities linked to the technologies, the AGETIC Survey establishes that 20% of people connected to the Internet are made up of the “digital indifferent”, that is to say, by those who see that being online is dispensable or use it in a limited way; 46% is composed of the “digital beginner”, that is, those who only use the “basic functions of the Internet, or other ICT tools”; 23% integrate “digital hyperconnected”, which depends on Internet; and ICT and 11% is the “digital geek”, who is a passionate person with high dependence on the Internet and ICT. Ninety-five
percent of the “digital geek” are in urban areas, and 5% are in rural areas; they are also especially composed of men. The document also states that those with the greatest technological capabilities are men. In a reference to knowledge for the management of documents, applications and programs, men are those that reveal greater skills in comparison to women.

Undoubtedly, in recent years access and use of communication media and technologies has grown. Official data from the 2012 National Census indicated that 74.7% of inhabited houses had a radio and that 6.2% had a television. This revealed that approximately 30.0% could not receive radio and television content at home. Regarding computer resources, only 23.3% of households owned a computer, 71.5% registered fixed or mobile telephony service, while only 9.4% of residences had internet service.

3.2 Regulatory Framework

3.2.1 Legal Features Linked to Media Competence


Apart from this specific aspect, the Political Constitution of the State, promulgated in 2009, dedicates its Seventh Chapter of Fundamental Rights and Guarantees to Social Communication, through Articles 106 and 107. Section I from the former one indicates that the “State guarantees the right to communication and the right to information”, a postulate that recognizes these rights for Bolivian citizens that are considered transcendental in recent generations of human rights. The same Article admits for the population the freedom of expression and opinion by any means of dissemination and without prior censorship. It includes for journalists the recognition of freedom of expression, the rights to communication and information and the conscience clause.

In the field of Civil Rights, the Constitution reinforces the freedom of expression, thought and opinion, and specifies the right to information such as “Access to information, to interpret, to analyze and to communicate freely, in both an individual and a collective manner”. In addition, it contemplates the “secret of private communications in all its forms, except official authorization”. The Constitution also incorporates a Section of Science, Technology and Research, in whose central provision it indicates that “The State will assume as a policy the implementation of strategies to incorporate the knowledge and application of new information and communication technologies”.

It is worth mentioning the Children and Adolescent Code Act of 2014, in which determinations that could be linked to education and media competence are considered (Law 548, 2014). It integrates a Chapter dedicated to the rights to Education, Information, Culture and Recreation. It states that

The child or adolescent has the right to receive, search and use all kinds of information that is consistent with their development. The State at all levels, mothers, parents, guardians or tutors, have the obligation to ensure that children receive information that is truthful, plural and appropriate to their development.

It adds that

The State must establish regulations and policies necessary to guarantee access, obtaining, receiving, search, dissemination of information and providing of opinions by children or adolescents, through any technological means and due legal protection, to ensure the respect of their rights.

In the Chapter of Rights to Comment, Participate and Ask, it is held that

The child, or adolescent, according to their age and characteristics of the stage of their development, has the right to freely express their opinion on matters of interest to them, and that the opinions they issue are taken into account.

He adds that “The opinions can be expressed personally or on behalf of their organization, as appropriate”. The paragraph (b) of the Chapter dedicated to Freedom, Dignity and Image recognizes the “Freedom of thought, conscience, opinion and expression” and complements the previous postulates.

In Bolivia there is no media law, as there is in other countries, but it would be worth pointing out some legal features that relate to these and the citizenship. An approximate of 15 current laws set obligations for the mass media destined to disseminate informative and educational messages that reinforce the validity of these provisions. This has not been fully accepted by the media because of its obligatory nature, seen as an imposition. The closest norm to the media is the General Law of Telecommunications, Information and Communication Technologies (Law 164, 2011). This law manifests that it wants to particularly protect the right to communication, for which it integrates several citizen rights around ICT, especially regarding the responsibilities of the service operating companies in the field. Prominent elements of the Law enunciate the importance of protecting the inviolability of the population’s
communications, the value of technologies for education and health, and
the urgency of giving priority attention to the most neglected social sec-
tors and geographical regions. It maintains that the State must promote
“the rights to free expression, to the diversity of the word, to the active,
plural and informed participation of the Bolivian population”.

In the most journalistic sphere, the Printing Law governs since 1925,
despite its antiquity. It delimits the scope of journalistic work in the
country, the sanctions in cases of certain violations and their ways of
processing them. At the same time, the National Code of Journalistic
Ethics has been in force since 2009 in the ethical sphere, a document
that defines the foundations for the journalistic work of the media. The
Code is also the basis for the operation of the National Court of Jour-
nalistic Ethics (TNÉP), which, while cautioning that journalistic actions
are appropriate, also innovates its scope of action when addressing and
processing complaints and claims that may arise from the citizenship
when it is affected by journalistic publications, to reach even corrective
determinations when such demands are verified as demonstrated.

3.2.2 The School Curriculum

From a National Education Congress, between 2007 and 2008, it was
established as the basic curriculum and study program within the Reg-
ular or Formal Education in the country. It is based on the Productive
Socio-Community Educational Model. At the Primary level, of the first
six years of studies corresponding to children, it is noted that the curric-
ulum, in its Community and Society Field, inserts subjects for commu-
nication learning from the first to the sixth year. The emphasis is placed
on interpersonal communication, communication resources for group
contact and a historical-cultural recovery of communication methods.
Around the mass media, the most mentioned is the printed newspaper,
with perspectives of its knowledge, its elaboration and the analysis of
its content. Radio and television are much less noted. About the digital
aspect, the management of some basic tools is proposed; by the end of
this Primary cycle the study of Internet, social networks, browsers and
the importance of information processing with these environments is
included. In relation to others, communication topics are indicated in
a much smaller proportion, and a clear educational sequence is not dis-
tinguished in its insertion. When you see the teaching methodologies,
the evaluations and the products referred to them, there is no clear cor-
respondence when you notice that their aggregation as topics does not
always lead to products or evaluations according to them.

At the secondary level, that is, the last six years of school, there is also
the Community and Society Field; in which there is the Commu-
nication and Language Area. This Area is divided into two: Communication
and Languages (native languages) and Communication and Languages
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(for foreign languages). It is within them that topics of communication are incorporated into the curriculum. In order to know the scope of these topics, the curriculum of the last five years of secondary school up to the baccalaureate was analyzed (Zeballos, 2016). In Communication and Languages (native languages), the studied topics are libraries, virtual libraries, mini-media, mass communication, indigenous media, ICT, norms that regulate media, fixed image, advertising, propaganda, video games, journalism, audiovisual media, international communication companies, Latin American cinema, public opinion and the media in the 21st century. There is a notorious emphasis in the approach of the mini-media compared to other topics, however, there is no clear sequence in this treatment; it starts by touching the mini-media, after we see references to the mass media and ICT, but it is a continuous mixture of these areas in the different levels of study, in cases with a reiterative sense (…) When proposing the contents in an intermingled and reiterated way in some moments, it is not possible to specify the depth with which its approach is intended.

(Zeballos, 2016, p. 232)

In Communication and Languages (foreign languages) the studied topics are some such as the use of communication media, ICT, Internet, Facebook, cultural imposition, propaganda, advertising, marketing, mass media, freedom of expression, image language, mini-media, Communication codes and cultural codes. The emphasis is given throughout the area on the theme of mini-media, in the preferable approach of “Critical Understanding” of messages and media performance, in the design of Pérez-Tornero and Varis (2012), and later in the “Communication and Creativity” with means and technologies. For the treatment of the set of topics noted, there are not always methodological teaching-learning proposals, while the products and evaluation criteria established in most cases are not entirely coherent with the subjects and methodologies studied.

Linking Primary and Secondary schools, the official curriculum has inserted in both cycles teaching content in communication for students; however, they do not present a clear pedagogical sequence in the whole and lack full consistency in the relationship of the topics, teaching methodologies, evaluation elements and products that should be elaborated in practice.

3.3 Institutions and Social Actors

3.3.1 National Government Projects

The national government has started, in 2014, the distribution of computers to educational units or schools so that they can be used particularly by their students of last grade of baccalaureate within the
educational facilities. These have been developed by the public company “Quipus” under the name of “Kuaa”, which in Guarani original language means “knowledge”. According to the AGETIC (2018), 138,910 computers have already been delivered. An important fact is that 1,800 educational units or schools in the country already have Internet, which means that 56% of these institutions have this valuable service, which undoubtedly should facilitate the use of the Kuaa.

This task is linked to the distribution of computers of name Quipus to teachers of schools and colleges since 2011, to support the use of technologies in the educational actions of these professionals. The name of these devices comes from the original Quechua language, arising from the expression “khipu”, which means “knot”, in the accounting management of the Inca culture. The AGETIC (2018), from its collection of information, indicates that, at the moment, 129,875 computers have been delivered, with coverage of 72.3% of education professionals. The system that is proposed to establish in the classroom is the interconnection between the computers Quipus – teachers – and the Kuaa – students.

Every year, determinations are made in the official educational field through Ministerial Resolutions of the Ministry of Education. With regard to the technological aspect, those issued in 2017 and 2018 are similar and provide that schools and colleges must make appropriate use of the equipment, among which they explicitly identify the Kuaa. They demand that for the use of the computers, the authorities of the educational institutions must make the necessary arrangements.

An Article of the indicated resolutions states textually:

The arbitrary use of cell phones by students and teachers during the development of classroom curricular activities is prohibited, because they interrupt the normal development of educational work. Its use for training processes must be previously planned and agreed with the educational actors.

Faced with the first part of the determination, its final expression opens the door to the use of cell phones in education, provided that the duly agreed forecasts are taken.

3.3.2 Other Experiences

There is no known compilation and systematization of media education experiences for minors and young people, which surely exist in the country though they are not limited to this conceptual proposal. Three media education experiences will be highlighted with character of training processes that are currently being implemented; two of them, of a university nature, were based on a reflection from the point of view of media competence and education, and their transcendence in the present and in the future.
In the university environment, corresponding to Higher Education in the country, an unprecedented enterprise is the one promoted by the Bolivian Catholic University “San Pablo” of the Regional branch in Cochabamba-city located in the center of the country. The initiative, implemented in 2018, consists of creating the subject of “Media Competence” aimed at new students who enter the University to carry out undergraduate studies in different careers. Its purpose is to promote abilities so that the student can learn and use tools and technological resources for learning, that is to say that it is intended to provide a set of contents that are useful in their studies. After an initial evaluation, based on the criteria of teachers and students, there is a consensus opinion that the incorporation of the subject has been a success.

Similarly, the Bolivian Catholic University “San Pablo” of the city of La Paz, seat of government of Bolivia, has decided to incorporate a subject destined to generate media abilities referred to the management of the technologies to students that begin their studies of degree in Different Careers. The objective is to provide a training that can serve them in their university journey, so the task is part of the use of technologies for learning. Hence its name: “Information and communication technologies for learning”. The proposal will be implemented at the beginning of 2019.

Within the framework of school education, an important project has been identified in the city of La Paz; it is the Santa Teresa Educational Unit, of Catholic religious inspiration and of a private nature, and belonging to the Teresian Institution. Based on what is established in the current Education Law, each educational unit must define a Socio-productive Project for the year of study, which implies uniting resources and efforts around a certain theme to achieve certain objectives within it. A task that must bring together the educational community as a whole, that is to say to the teaching staff, governing body, students and parents, always with the purpose of getting a contribution to the community. On this line, the Santa Teresa Educational Unit has decided to promote the Project entitled “We use ICT with a critical and reflective attitude for the good of the community”.

The decision to propose its 2018 Project on this issue has been based on the observation of certain negative events that affect children and adolescents, which has led to the need to educate and guide the educational community in awareness, consumption and a critical-reflective use of information and ICTs in order to reverse misinformation, computer pornography, and trafficking of people and others that result from the misuse of social networks.

The proposal includes the realization of research activities, training, production of communication materials and interaction with citizens. In its specific goals it is identified that the emphasis is on promoting
analysis and critical understanding of media messages and the uses of technologies. Something that is highlighted in the global idea is the role that teachers, to whom has opened the possibility of doing all the innovative actions that they see appropriate in their speciality and subject.

3.4 Teacher Training

The Political Constitution of the State (2009) and the Law of Education “Avelino Siñani and Elizardo Pérez” (Law 070, 2010) highlight the importance of teacher training and record guidelines for its development. Following now, two State experiences of complementary and continuing education will be described, with an emphasis on communication training: The Complementary Training Program for Teachers in Practice (PROFOCOM) and the Specialized Unit for Continuing Education (UNEFCO).

The PROFOCOM corresponds to the complementary training designed for teachers to achieve undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. For the degree program about 15 modules or educational texts have been developed. From these, seven have been analyzed, which are within the Area of Communication and Languages. Evidently, they make reference to communication issues, among which we highlight, in order of importance, the reference to the ideological impact of media, the presence of violence in some of its contents, the type of representation of the reality that they carry out on the base of certain interests, their public positioning, human communication and dialogue, communication in indigenous peoples, the characteristics of certain communication products and ICTs. The emphasis, from what was observed, is centered in the reflection of the media content and its possible impact on society; therefore, within the design of Pérez-Tornero and Varis (2012), the focus is placed on developing the ability of “Critical Understanding”. The intention to strengthen the abilities of “Communication and Creativity” and “Access and Use” is minimal.

UNEFCO is a public organism that works constantly in the continuing education of teachers. It uses face-to-face and virtual training resources. Their task is eased because it has offices in different parts of the country. For its task, it has produced work materials and guide notebooks. In order to know the contents that are taught in communication topics, 20 texts have been analyzed (Zeballos, 2016). The first documents were “Introduction to the use of the computer for educators”, “Word processor and production of educational texts”, “Spreadsheet: spreadsheets and school lists”, “Presentation designer: design of educational presentations” and “Internet: educational use of the Internet”. The general contents of these products are aimed at providing an introduction on the composition and operation of a computer, the basic procedures to processing written and visual digital information, the use of the spreadsheet, the preparation of audiovisual presentations and
the basic management of Internet and its tools. To this last topic, the text “Educational Use of Multimedia through the Internet” was added, and it provides guidance on the search, download and use of various audiovisual resources for educational purposes. Up to here it could be said that the knowledge aspired to be shared is proposed to increase the incorporation of different technological and communicational tools for teaching; this represents the focus.

Two other educational publications of the UNEFCO are “Educational and technological revolution” and “Computers for students and interactivity with the teacher”. They explain in particular the contributions of ICT in the field of education in the country, with emphasis on the introduction of computers Kuau for learning in the classroom.

A third set of UNEFCO materials makes reference to how ICTs can support teaching methodologies on the subjects of mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology and geography at different levels of regular education. Each module is intended for a subject and grade. The purpose of this group of documents is to provide guidelines for Web sites that can be useful to educators for the aforementioned subjects, as well as providing instructions for downloading files, processing and using them, and for creating audiovisual products and their didactic use. In all cases the focus, again, is to resort and use ICTs as means of teaching.

Two writings that do seek the greatest knowledge of teachers regarding communication issues not as a teaching tool but as an object of study are the Workbook “The language of mass media” and the Activity Booklet “Language of mass media communication”. The former refers to communication, its history, languages, functions, contents, advantages and disadvantages, advertising, propaganda, the media impact on the recipients and on the context, audiovisual messages, critical reading of messages, the presence of women and indigenous peoples in the media, content production and ICT for education. Examples and specific analyzes are given in different topics. Returning to the categories of Pérez-Tornero and Varis (2012), the inclination is placed on the “Critical Understanding” of the media world and not so much on the use or elaboration of communicational products. The Booklet is more practical because it adds exercises to understand the topics and procedures for its application better. Compared to the Workbook, the Booklet adds topics such as the difference between communication and information, journalism, freedom of expression and public opinion. In both texts it is neither explicit that their topics can be shared with the students nor ways to do such a thing, but it is clear that the teachers who review them would obtain criteria to address the communication topics inserted with their students and even to incorporate some methodologies for their learning.

To expand an overview related to teacher education in communication it is necessary to highlight two important initiatives of the Ministry of Education: Educabolivìa.bo, created in 2007, is a portal designed to
provide computer resources that can serve educators to know, download and produce digital materials that will be useful to the teaching processes in different subjects of school education (Educabolivia.com, 2018). Due to the type of support in which it is found, it is at the service of teachers throughout the country. On the other hand, Educa Innova is an annual national meeting held since 2014 with the aim of emphasizing and exchanging the most notable experiences developed in Bolivia on educational practices based on the use of ICT. It is constituted in an instance in which teachers can expose their educational innovations with modern technologies, so it also serves as a means to encourage the generation of these pedagogical ventures. Both Educaboliva and Bolivia Innova are projects that seek to introduce and strengthen the use of ICT in national education.

3.5 Academic Production

Among the experiences that refer to media education in the country, those promoted by the Oblate priest of María Inmaculada, Gregorio Irirarte and the pedagogue Marta Orsini stand out. Both people had a high social commitment in life and were characterized by their constant defense of human rights. Among their educational contributions are their action initiatives and publications in the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s. Two projects stand out: The “Popular Education Support Center (CAEP)”, in the city of Huanuni from the Department of Oruro, and “Education and media in Cochabamba” developed in the city of Cochabamba. The emphasis of their work and their publications was to address the critical analysis of mass media messages and to propose practical and simple procedures for this purpose. Their texts incorporate conceptual reflections and very didactic exercises for educational use with different groups of people. Without a doubt, they have not lost their validity for those who want to use them. Among their most prominent publications are: “Critical awareness and media. Analysis techniques” (Iriarte & Orsini, 1995), “Education and media. Experience in the classroom” (Orsini, 1998) and “TV, yes or no. The use of TV in the educational system” (Iriarte, 2012).

The first research, from the focus of media competence and education on which we have evidence in the country, is by René Zeballos (2016) from a university academic work entitled “The media competence of young people in the city of La Paz (Bolivia). Dimensions for the interaction with mass and digital audiovisual media”. The inquiry was later published in the book The Media Competence of Young People in the City of La Paz. Citizen Abilities for Interaction with Communication Media and Technologies (Zeballos, 2017a) and synthesized in the article “Abilities and media competences in Bolivia. A look at the young people from La Paz city” (Zeballos, 2017b) published on The Journal of Social
Communication of the Bolivian Catholic University “San Pablo” from La Paz, with the central intention of promoting a greater knowledge and approach of the conceptual and analytical proposal referred to the competence and media education in the country.

The investigation ascertains the degree of media competence of young college freshmen from the university “Universidad Mayor de San Andrés”, of a public nature, and from six private universities in the La Paz city, which in the deep inside would give guidelines for their training in the subject when finishing their baccalaureate. Based on the proposal of dimensions of media competence of Pérez-Tornero and Varis (2012) and according to certain parameters of analysis, the study evaluates the abilities of the student youth regarding their abilities to access, use, critically understand, create and communicate with traditional and digital audiovisual media, knowledge to which we add information from the media context and digital technologies advances. The final conclusion was that the degree of media competence of the students was unfavorable, within the incorporated categories, a level that in numerical terms was 31.73 out of 100 points. Within this discrete level, 37.1% show qualities to critically understand messages and communication media and technologies, 26.3% to use them to communicate and 25.1% to access them and use them as users, while only 21.8% know features of the media context where they live.

It is to highlight that 74.4% have indicated that it would be very important to implement media education processes for the Bolivian society. In different collateral conversations to the study it could also be verified a strong coincidence of professionals in education, people with other occupations and schools students, in the sense that it is urgent that they execute educational projects in the field of media and information technologies and communication. This reflection agrees, of course, with the central result of the research carried out, in which important shortcomings are detected in young university students about knowledge and skills in the field of study.

Although it does not fully enter into the media abilities of the most attended social groups in this publication, the book State of Information and Communication Technologies in the Plurinational State of Bolivia, by the public entity AGETIC, of 2018, makes reference in some of its sections to certain citizen knowledge about ICT, which could serve to deepen in other investigations of certain topics.

3.6 General Appraisal

On the basis of the information obtained, it can be indicated that the advances in Bolivia regarding policies, strategies and actions in the field of competence and media education, especially for children, adolescents and youth, are limited.
From the State, including the legal framework, no proposals have been established that explicitly promote the media education of these social groups, despite the fact that, today and in the future, it is very necessary. That does not take away certain efforts such as the provision of computers in educational units for the use of students and teachers, and the creation of projects prepared for teacher training in communication issues and ICT, despite that these enterprises emphasize in providing abilities for their use as teaching means and not so much as objects or subjects of study, as it is preferentially demanded by the qualification referred to media education.

It is good to indicate that the official curriculum for primary and secondary school education, analyzed above in a summarized manner, contains sections directed towards topics of human communication, mass communication and digital communication, as outlined in a summarized manner. This is appropriate from the current need to touch these contents, despite which it has been found, that its design shows a lack of full comprehensiveness in terms of what is addressed, the teaching-learning methodologies incorporated, the results and the criteria of evaluation. A dispersion and lack of sequentiality prevails, and the emphasis on promoting “Critical Understanding” of the contents and phenomena of communication is notable, and not so much in developing other abilities.

The institutional experiences within the conception of competence and media education are recent. From the information that has been obtained, there are two institutional experiences implemented by the Bolivian Catholic University “San Pablo”. They refer to training in ICT to students who begin their undergraduate studies, so that this baggage will serve them for their university studies. In the school environment, the project of the Santa Teresa Educational Unit of La Paz city has been identified. Its design proposes to encourage the analysis and critical use of ICT in its Educational Community. The central effort is given by their teachers and professors, who have incorporated them as teaching assistance, but also as topics for educational reflection. There is left an immediate objective to make some adjustments in the process so that under the theoretical protection of education and media competence, it will manage to order their actions to arrive at their purposes.

Around the publications referred to the topic, the most outstanding of past years has been the production of Gregorio Iriarte, Oblate Missionary of María Inmaculada, and Marta Orsini, who, along with their institutional projects, produced several documents in the line of critical analysis of the media, their messages and the importance of their public presence. As stated earlier, these materials could still have a valuable educational use in school and non-school education. Already nowadays, and this time in terms of media competence and education, the only work that could be identified is at the end of 2016 by René Zeballos. This work is an investigation about the degree of media competence
of young people in La Paz city. Among other forms of dissemination, the study was later published in the country in a book, in an academic article and in another journalistic magazine with the aim of positioning the importance of the topic. The author is the representative in Bolivia of the Euro-American Interuniversity Network for Research on Media Competencies for Citizenship (ALFAMED).

A strong statement about the reasons why the advances noted were given in recent years could not be made because there are no studies about the subject. It could be inferred that certain legal norms, that inserted elements linked to communication, information and communication media and technologies, have influenced. This framework has undoubtedly led to the insertion of contents related to the subject in the official school curriculum. It is certain that outside the official scope a cause is the institutional initiative that has identified the importance of the media education of children and young people to whom they dedicate their educational work. A third explanation could be the media and technological presence itself, which shows the need to address a work aimed at enhancing media skills of different social groups.

In this panorama it is very clear that the challenges are wide. On the one hand, it is the State, in its various instances, that should promote policies and actions aimed at strengthening attention on the value that media education of the population currently has. It would be the ideal way that from formal school education aims at qualifying citizens in the media field.

It is also the non-public, educational and non-educational entities that would have to make decisions and concrete plans in order to promote and strengthen proposals. Academic institutions of higher education and professionals from different disciplines should not be left aside because, from these instances, ideas, research and texts are often generated that insert and promote initiatives of varied order in every society.

It is without a doubt that there are different types of abilities in the country to increase organized work in favor of contributing to the media education of citizens. It remains to visualize with more precision the degree of its importance for many present and future facets of human life – not only to see the risks that could be encountered when interacting with media and communication technologies, as is usually the case – and to be willing to concretize in fact those criteria and reflections in favor. On this basis, the future would tend to look more promising.

References
4 Media education in Brazil. Dilemmas, limits and possibilities
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4.1 Sociopolitical Context

The relations between the national and international contexts and their socio-cultural specificities lead us to understand media education as a field in construction at the interface of education and communication, as a field of knowledge and intervention, as educational praxis and as an instance of theoretical reflection about this praxis (with objectives, methodologies and evaluation) in different contexts, both in and out of schools. In this way, working with medias in education does not always mean conducting “media education” because “there are many uses of media in education that are not media education” (Rivoltella, 2017, p. 228).

In the Brazilian context, institutional and social perspectives are revealed in the tensions and overlappings between the practical and reflexive dimensions of media education, and although there are many experiences of this nature, they are not always conceptualized in this way (Freire, 1981). This is because in Brazil, and perhaps in Latin America, social needs require actions and experiences that are not always accompanied by reflection and conceptualization.

In the context of the recent history of media education in Brazil, Belloni (2012) conducts a historic synthesis from the 1960s until 2010 and calls attention to political aspects and their consequences for the specificity of the field that should be reviewed by looking at the years from 1988 until 2018.

In the late 1980s, the country began to experience the end of the dictatorship (1964–1985), and the context of change brought together a wide variety of political movements in the struggle for direct presidential elections, which were held in 1989. With the end of military censorship, a new climate in the field of communication sparked the rise of new media groups, and freedom of expression was revived with a more investigative journalism that revealed scandals of the dictatorship, corruption and crimes of torture.

At that time, the presence of educational technologies – and their emphasis that was still on technology itself – used a definition of media education that distinguished the dimensions object of study and pedagogical tool.
In the international context, other definitions appeared at events that had been promoted by UNESCO since the 1970s, and different proposals and experiences of media education began to highlight the pedagogical potential of the electronic media that arose in different countries.

In Brazil, a spirit of change accompanied the rise of proposals for transformative public policies for schools. These were highlighted by the Special Education Program of Darcy Ribeiro, which made possible the experience of the Integrated Centres for Public Education in Rio de Janeiro, “the first experience with integral education, of a significant scope in Brazil, with intensive use of the medias (television, radio, comics, print media) and aimed at low income children and adolescents (known as popular education)” (Belloni, 2012, p. 44).

In a context of repoliticalization and expectations for change, education was seen as a means for the emancipation of individuals, and the integration of information and communications technology (ICTs) and the pedagogical use of the medias were perceived as necessary conditions for attaining Quality Education for All. Thus, various experiences with media education – still scattered across the country, without a public policy, and often engaged with independent groups, not in an official character – were promoted by communicators and educators who were often affiliated to churches or associations. These experiences and the International Convention on the Rights of Children and Adolescents (1989) inspired the creation of the Statute of the Child and Adolescent in Brazil (1989).

With the Grünewald Declaration, of 1982, new commitments to effective educational actions for the international field of media education consolidated their importance (Rivoltella, 2012). Belloni (2012) recalls that at the UNESCO meeting that drafted the declaration, the term “media education” became consecrated and its need was reaffirmed in four broad recommendations that are current until today: media education programmes, teacher training, research and international cooperation.

In the early 1990s, Brazil experienced a massive and accelerated diffusion of the new ICTs as personal computers and cell phones and other devices began to enter daily life, along with television and the internet. In the transition between a “civilization of the image”, an “information society”, a “society of knowledge” and a “network society”, the social and interactive medias and the processes for the construction of meanings in digital culture shaped some challenges to education at that time.

Since the approval of the new Law for National Educational Guidelines and Bases (Lei nº 9394/96) and the National Curricular Parameters for Fundamental Education, issues linked to the use of technological resources in education gained greater scope, stimulated by the International Conference “Educating for the Media and for the Digital Era”,...
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held in Vienna in 1999. Media Education was understood as a right of children and adolescents, which signified a new mark in its trajectory:

For the first time documents of this type expressed concern for listening to and the effective participation of children and youth in the spirit of the International Convention of the Rights of Children and Adolescents in media education actions and programs aimed at them.

(Bévort & Belloni, 2009, p. 1091)

At the turn of the 21st century, many media education experiences were developed in Brazil using various approaches: in community spaces, in non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and in and outside of schools. Nevertheless, “without a national policy for the sector (Brazil has never had one), these expectations tend not to multiply and to disappear without making significant contributions to educational processes” (Belloni, 2012, p. 50).

The challenge of integrating ICTs to educational processes and of understanding the new modes of learning and teaching that the digital devices offer increases the challenge of providing critical formation for new generations. After all, if technological innovation is the pretext and means for pedagogical change, media education “could” be a transformative mechanism.

In the first decade of the new century, in the governments of President Fernando Henrique Cardoso and then of President Luis Inácio Lula da Silva, social conditions in the country progressed with some redistribution of income, but this was not sufficiently accompanied by innovative policies in education and healthcare. The tensions between those who defend and those who reject the discussion about technologies in schools led to the continuity of educating teachers who were out-of-date and unprepared to teach contemporary children and youth.

Given the great transformations that the so-called “fourth industrial revolution” promoted through the internet and the advances in telematics, nanotechnology and augmented reality, infinite possibilities have been created in the context of digital culture. Although this occurred in a socioeconomic context of social democratization of the country, with the enactment of effective policies to redistribute income, valorize popular culture and improve access to education and to ICTs, statistics show that Brazilian society has appropriated digital technologies in an intense, accelerated and unequal manner. And as much as computers, notebooks and mobile devices (cell phones, smartphones, tablets) have transformed the daily lives of a large portion of the Brazilian population, this presence is still not “naturalized” in schools leading to countless polemics and reflections. Although studies reveal the potential of new modes of learning with technologies, children and youth demonstrate
that they learn by using them outside of school and at times, “despite it”, which creates the need for articulations between formal and informal learnings (Fantin, 2015).

With the diffusion of mobile digital technologies, the reflection on media education evolved and some possible consensuses incorporated new concepts. Cultural Studies and the Mediations Theory of J. Martin-Barbero came to be important references in the field, together with ideas from N. Canclini and G. Orozco-Gomes, J. Gonnet, G. Jacquinot, E. Bevort, B. Tufte, C. Bazalgette, D. Buckingham and P.C. Rivoltella. In this same period, media education came to defend digital inclusion – in the dimension of access, mediation and quality of appropriation in the modes of operating the devices that allow everyone to become producers of media messages. But it sought even more, because the objective of having students engage in production and critical interpretation goes beyond them simply reading and includes the development of their capacity for expression, creativity and responsible sharing.

The conviction of the urgent need to defend media education is shared in international and national contexts, which understand that it is as necessary an element in the exercise of active citizenship as reading and writing were in the early 19th century. In this context, the emphasis on “media literacy” and the “multiliteracies” approach gained visibility.

In Brazil, some public policies began to be shaped based on projects such as e-ProInfo, Collaborative and digital learning environment of the National Program of Educational Technology (ProInfo), that aims to promote the pedagogical use of ICTs in public elementary and middle schools, One Computer Per Student Program (PROUCA), and Banda Larga, which we will discuss below. With the definition by the European Council of the eight basic competencies to be worked with in schools – including digital competency – various proposals encouraged action in this realm. One of them was the proposal from UNESCO (2013) about media literacy, which has also had repercussions on media educational practices in Brazil and on the discussion of the National Common Curricular Base.

Yet Brazil continues to present few advances in media education and the integration of ICTs, as Belloni (2012, p. 53) affirms, “there are no ICTs in the initial education of teachers, and with unprepared teachers and without media education, schools are full of unused computers that lack quality”. At the same time, she finds reason for “a drop of optimism, a reason for hope: history advances, new generations of teachers are including this issue in their reflections and these machines in their practices” (Belloni, 2012, p. 53).

In the decade of 2010, the decisive role performed by social media has been observed, by networks and by mobile technologies and their applications (for example, WhatsApp, which is extremely popular in the Brazilian context). In the intensification of the criticisms of the
government of President Dilma Rousseff in 2015, both large communication companies and alternative media had a very active role with the use of social media by the population, accentuating the opposing political forces.

In 2016, government measures froze investments in education for more than 20 years. In addition, the propagation of fake news, viral memes and the use of WhatsApp for electoral purposes had various implications for the school universe, particularly concerning the use of technologies in schools and teacher-student relationships.

In this situation, the irresponsible uses of medias and different forms of manipulation of public opinion revive the need to reaffirm the critical sense of media education in relation to reading, production and critical and responsible sharing. If in the early years of the century the pedagogical use of all the medias in schools was defended, challenging certain practices of educational mediation, the excessive use of mobile technologies is now questioned. Mobile devices are increasingly understood as an extension of the body, environment and as a connective tissue of social relations that have negative repercussions on attention spans and the lack of concentration, given that their use in school does not always lead to better learning (Belland & Murphy, 2015). These are issues that increasingly challenge the presence of media education in the formation of children, youth, teachers and adults in general.

4.2 Regulatory Framework

Guidelines for the construction of media education in Brazil were established by the first definitions of media education from UNESCO, which led to various denominations: media education in English-speaking countries Education aux Médias in France, Educación en los medios in Spain, Educação para os media in Portugal, and Mídia Educação and Educomunicação in Brazil.

Since there is no single model for promoting actions in the realm of media education, in the Brazilian context the media education approach has stood out, and that of “educommunication”. For Belloni (2002, p. 9), the dimensions of media education as a complex and multifaceted object of study and as pedagogical tools are inseparable. For Soares (2014, p. 18), the focus of educommunication is “on the scope of the communicative process”.

Upon considering that although the ultimate objective of media education and educommunication are the same, various scholars (Deliberador, 2012; Fantin, 2006, 2011; Girardello & Orofino, 2012) suggest that the major difference is in their relationships to the role of professionals. For Jacquinot (1998), media education should be an asset of each educator and teacher, as part of the profile of 21st century teachers who are also “educommunicators” because they integrate various medias in their
practices. Inspired by this idea, Rivoltella (2002) affirms that any educator or teacher can be a media-educator, because this involves a “media-educative posture” of working pedagogically with all media. Thus, media education would be a new “new ‘dimension’ of being an educator and teacher” and the current challenge is to understand media education as education itself, that is, media education becomes education itself (Rivoltella, 2006, p. 244). Meanwhile, Soares (1999) understands that this new professional educommunicator belongs to the field of communication and should act in conjunction with teachers. After many years working with this perspective, in 2011 a bachelor’s and teacher certification course in educommunication was created at the University of São Paulo in 2011.

This context highlights the importance of education that prepares teachers, educators and communicators for their new functions, situated at the convergence between the two fields – education and communication. Recognizing that there are specificities, a movement is observed in Brazil of more consistent collaboration between those who act in the realm of media education, beyond theoretical-pragmatic affiliations.

In recent years, in the consolidation of the guidelines, conducting media education has begun to gain greater recognition in interlocution with international experiences, based on Brazil’s cultural singularity and diversity (Girardello & Orofino, 2012). It is important to highlight the relevance of the dialogues between Brazilian and foreign researchers (Bévort & Belloni, 2009) and of studies in partnerships – which are the fruit of institutional agreements and cooperation between Brazilian and foreign universities (Fantin & Rivoltella, 2012) – which have gained growing visibility in media education nationally and internationally.

Among the plurality of media educational experiences, proposals have been constructed that are constantly re-elaborated in official documents, organized movements, and academic events and meetings that promote ideas, consolidate practices and contribute to the construction of this field, and in Brazil they are at times transformed into norms.

In this regard, the Grunwald Declaration (Unesco, 1982) and the other documents (Unesco, 2005) guided the construction of statements in Brazil: the Carta do Rio (2004) written at the Rio Summit on Youth, Media and Children; and the Carta de Florianópolis para a Mídia Educação² (2006) produced at the First Research Seminar in Media Education, held at the Federal University at Santa Catarina (UFSC), Florianópolis.

Nevertheless, the Brazilian documents have still not garnered sufficient strength to mobilize public policies. Although the debates and studies promoted by Unesco and international agencies had little official participation from Brazil, they must be mentioned, both because of their importance and for their influence on local trends and inspiration for future practices and conceptual redefinitions.
Therefore, various attempts were made to develop public policies and norms at the interface between education and communication by means of inter-ministerial programmes, whether as part of efforts to adopt communicational technologies and infrastructure to “modernize and equip” schools, or in the realm of teacher education. Among the public policies and the government projects developed in recent years, the National Program for Educational Technology (E-proinfo) was a pioneer in the 1990s in equipping schools with technology (Quartiero, 2012).

Later, the One Laptop per Child project (PROUCA), along with the Broadband in the Schools Program sought to provide digital inclusion experiences in schools by issuing notebooks to students and teachers in elementary and intermediary schools, for teacher education and community insertion. Nevertheless, as various studies have found, for different reasons (related to infrastructure, educational models and a lack of maintenance, among others) this proposal proved to be a brief public policy that quickly shifted from enthusiasm to disenchantment (Quartiero, Bonilla, & Fantin, 2015). In the continuity of the proposals for the insertion of ICTs in schools, even without a rigorous evaluation of this policy, the purchase of tablets for high school teachers was proposed, nearly simultaneously to the offer of a Course in Education and Digital Culture, which was a proposal for online education that called for voluntary adhesion of schools interested in participating. For Miranda (2014, p. 72), the establishment of fragmented laws and actions contrasted with “the measures for [establishing] access to digital technologies and the realizations that adopt an integral vision of media education, culminating in the incapacity to compose a set of planned policies for the field”.

It is important to highlight that despite the various government programmes and laws listed on the site “governodigital”³: Digital Inclusion, Broadband in Schools, Casa Brasil, Centre for the Reconditioning of Computers, Digital Cities, Computers for Inclusion, Digital Inclusion of Rural Youth, Workshop for Digital Inclusion, the Connected Citizen Project, Computers for All, the Program for the Implantation of Multifunctional Resource Rooms, the Digital and Social Inclusion Program, Integrated Proinfo, Digital Citizenship Networks, Telecenters, Digital Territories and One Computer per Student – most of which are still active – they have functioned under highly precarious conditions. The important work of the Internet Management Committee (CGI) should be highlighted, which congregates various social actors who are interested in the internet and had an important role in the development of Brazil’s “Marco Civil Internet” regulatory guidelines, which are internationally recognized. Nevertheless, some programmes also reveal a strong emphasis on infrastructural aspects that are linked to the Ministry of Communications and are rarely accompanied by educational and cultural policies.
In 2017, the National Common Curricular Base was approved, a normative document that defines the elements essential to the education of students in different phases and modalities of basic education, in all school networks and public and private institutions. It is a mandatory reference in the development of school curriculums and pedagogical proposals for early childhood education and fundamental education (Brasil, 2017). Although it contains a polysemic vision of technology – including ICTs, digital ICTs, new ICTs and other concepts – the emphasis is still instrumental, that is, on a pedagogical tool.

Therefore, the precariousness and inefficiency of public policies reveal a gap between the critical and cultural perspective of media education and the instrumental concept that has guided the elaboration of the norms (Fantin, 2014).

4.3 Institutions or Social Actors

The development of proposals for public policies for media education requires a design that involves the federal, state and local spheres, as well as the private sector and organized civil society (Siqueira & Canela, 2012). This process involves administrators, politicians and specialists in the field as recognized by international and multilateral agencies, but these actors are not always attentive to the political-pedagogical commitments of the demands of the field as indicated by studies. In most cases, because they attend the interests of the government at the time and not of an on-going plan of the state, the public policies developed in the field in recent years also reveal electoral interests.

The possibility of equipping schools with computer laboratories seems to “bring more votes” than investing in education, recalls Pinto (2009), and this is not a prerogative in the Brazilian context. The pulverization of public policies for the sector in Brazil, which emphasize the dimension of access to equipment with strongly instrumental support and stimulus to the production chain, is not always accompanied by educational policies that qualify the pedagogical mediation and the resulting educational and media practices.

In this context, it is possible to indicate some social actors that stand out in the promotion of actions in the realm of media education:

1. State and municipal government institutions and various national government institutions and organizations (linked to the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Science and Technology): actions of state and municipal secretariats of education, and their nuclei of education and technology in the preparation and development of public policies for the sector, and particularly at schools.

2. Universities and foundations: direct participation, consulting, initial and continuing teacher education and research at institutions and
schools, associations and other organizations with the participation of their administrators, professors, researchers and social educators. Civil society organizations: public and private associations, religious institutions and NGOs that form the Network of Communication, Education and Participation (Rede CEP) dedicated to the implementation of public policies in the field. Many of these groups adopt the concepts of educommunication in the communication, media and educational actions, programmes, products and practices. This is the case of the project educom.radio at municipal secretariats of education (Soares, 2014) and in the provision of assistance to other educational projects about the use of media at the Ministry of Education.

Other social actors who construct and promote media education in Brazilian contexts: research groups (professors, researchers, master’s and doctoral students), cultural producers, social educators, communicators, citizen agents in networks and other collectives that seek to strengthen projects “that are involved in the formal realm of education” (Miranda, 2014, p. 72).

Meanwhile, in the academic and university realm, various research groups in the field of education and communication have assumed an important role in the promotion of media education, combining teaching, research and extension. By educating and assisting state and municipal staffs, and public and private schools in different municipalities, they at times promote activist, collaborative and militant practices in support of media education, digital inclusion and social participation.

In general, the work of these actors is based on different theoretical and methodological supports for media education, educommunication and others according to the thematic and interdisciplinary diversity that the field congregates: cinema/audiovisual; digital culture; corporality, recreational and sports media; advertising and consumption; media competency; art, media and citizenship and others. Some research groups linked to graduate programmes have had important action in this field in Brazil, synthesized in themes such as: education, media, children and culture; communication, technology and digital culture; and communication and art, body, language and others. The actions of a wide variety of observatories, interdisciplinary labs and networks also stands out, which involve different graduate and undergraduate departments at Brazilian universities, cultural associations, social movements and other entities.

The action of research groups has had strong repercussions on the proposals for the initial and continued education of teachers.

### 4.4 Teacher Training

Teacher education in the realm of Media Education – which takes place both in university courses and teacher accreditation programmes and
in programmes for permanent or continuing professional training – is mostly offered by public institutions and civic organizations.

In academic space and in school systems, various models for the insertion of media education curriculums are found in initial teacher education: as an autonomous discipline – either required or optional; with a transversal character; in workshops; thematic seminars; mixed models and others (Fantin, 2012a, 2012b). These choices are based on criteria for didactic relevance, curricular articulation and forms of operationalization and reveal different emphases, approaches and terminologies. The course plans are diversified and express the theoretical affiliations of the schools or research groups at the associated institutions. Their approaches emphasize: a theoretical and conceptual character; an operative and instrumental character; and a pragmatic character in relation to pedagogical and social implications of the uses of technologies in education.

In the realm of continuing education, the action of universities and research groups in partnership with municipal, state and federal secretariats is noted in the preparation and development of proposals for teacher education (courses accompaniment in schools, research-education, events). Allied to this, there is a diversity of offers of specialization courses about the theme, in classrooms or distance education programmes.

Despite the strong investment in the insertion of ICTs in Brazilian schools in recent years, public policies for teacher education and curricular insertion of media education have still not been consolidated. Although the themes of media education have been mentioned in the Law for National Educational Guidelines and Bases (Brasil, 1996), in the National Curriculum Parameters (1997), in the National Curriculum Guidelines for Teacher Education (Brasil, 2006), in the National Education Plan (Brasil, 2014) and in the National Common Curricular Base (2017), there are still gaps in the national policy for the sector.

When they are not absent from the debate, the proposals for continuing education in this field have proved to be ineffective given the challenges mentioned. They usually reinforce the idea of media education as merely a pedagogical resource and not as an object of critical study that is articulated to other fields of knowledge as it is in other countries. This ignores the needs of education, of the current curriculum and emerging issues of contemporary culture.

### 4.5 Academic Production

When considering the important Brazilian and international references for media education, the legacy of Paulo Freire stands out, who affirmed, "there is no education without communication", and has been published and translated in more than 60 countries.
The academic production in the field of media education in Brazil involves a wide breadth of themes and their specificities. In recent years, many studies and articles were published about education and communication in general and about media education in particular considering various issues including public policies in the field, teacher education, ICTs in education, the uses and practices with media by children and youth, as well as mediations and challenges of digital culture. There is not sufficient space here to situate all the results— not even as a summary— of the publications in the realm of media education, which in a certain way also indicates the absence of detailed and revised systematizations about the publications in books and periodicals in recent years, as demonstrated by the study of Miguel et al. (2017), who compared academic production in media and education in Brazil and France.

To sketch a profile of Brazilian academic production about education and communication and to identify relevant aspects and gaps in this production, Vermelho and Areu (2005) conducted a survey of works published in periodicals in the field between 1982 and 2002, addressing themes, medias, studies, theoretical-methodological references and indicators for the pedagogical and communicational practices. The survey highlights the historic evolution of the themes (the medias addressed, the didactic-pedagogical methodologies and their applications) and indicates a growth of publications since the second half of the 1990s, as well as a regionality of productions. The central aspects addressed in the period analysed include the relation of individuals with the media, as well as the media contents and methodology (predominantly empiric). Fundamental and higher education are the levels of education most studied, revealing a gap of studies about early childhood and high school education and education outside of schools.

Since then, much has certainly changed, and the challenges of media education have been increasingly systematized in new studies, research, partnerships and interlocutions that are revealed in the diversity of publications in journals in the field and in interdisciplinary publications, books, theses and articles that most often result from the work of consolidated research groups linked to university graduate studies.

There are many graduate programmes that offer masters and doctoral courses with this emphasis as well as research lines working with the themes of education and communication. A recent analysis of production in the field of media education in the database of the Brazilian research support agency CAPES reveals that more than 430 studies were conducted in the past 20 years in 80 graduate courses in Brazil.

While strong support and incentives were available to research in Brazil from 2008 to 2014, with an increase in financing and study grants, in recent years there has been a sharp reduction, accompanying budget cuts in education in general and in the financing of research in particular, which compromises the quality of work conducted in the field.
Meanwhile, these issues have been raised for discussion in events in the field, which have become important spaces for reflection, promotion and socialization of productions.

Among the most significant academic events on a national level are the Congress of the National Association of Research in Education (Anped)\(^5\) and the Brazilian Congress of Communication Sciences (Intercom).\(^6\)

At the ANPED congress of 2012, a mapping was conducted, published in the Dossiê Revista Teias (2012), about the academic and scientific productions presented in the Education and Communication Working Group between 1990 and 2010. The mapping presents the theoretical-methodological diversity of the studies presented in the working group, which is revealed in the breadth of themes linked to media and cultural processes and to educational processes conducted in and outside schools and universities.

At the Intercom congress of 2015, the communication and education research group, which is part of the thematic division Communicational Interfaces, organized a series of publications that were presented at the congress that year, with studies that situate theoretical and methodological references of communicational processes and their modes of learning and teaching in formal, informal and non-formal educational spaces (Naganimi, 2016). The themes involve theoretical and professional education, educational processes and interactivity in communication and education.

Other academic events have been organized in the past ten years: the Research in Media Education Seminar (UFSC), the Research in Education and Media Colloquium (Unirio/Federal University of the State of Rio de Janeiro, PUC-Rio/Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro/UER), the Web Curriculum (PUC-SP/Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo) and EDUCOM (ECA, School of Communication and Art/USP, University of São Paulo). More recently, in the realm of the Euro-American Inter-institutional Network for Research on Media Competencies for Citizenship, Red ALFAMED, the I International Symposium on Media Literacy and the II International Congress on Media Competencies (UFJF, Federal University of Juiz de Fora) were conducted, and various works presented were published in the dossier Competência midiática para a cidadania [Media competence for citizenship], organized by Borges and Aguaded (2018, p. 1), which highlighted the “need to organize a mapping of works conducted in Brazil and in Euroamerican countries about the theme of media competence”.

### 4.6 General Appraisal

This article sought to situate a few dilemmas, limits and possibilities related to media education in Brazil. The historic and contextual aspects in Brazil reveal sociopolitical and cultural specificities that are reflected
in other aspects analysed, particularly the recent limits on investment in the field. The situation of guidelines highlighted the importance of public policies concerning the insertion of technologies in schools and conquests related to digital access and inclusion and the limits of proposals for instrumental education, which have little dialogue with the media education approach and reflexive uses of the media in the context of digital culture.

Dilemmas and limits challenge a wide variety of institutions and their social actors who confront the opportunities for promoting media education in and outside schools, in efforts to minimize the gaps between the formal and informal as well as intergenerational and linguistic gaps and those between knowledge and culture, to assure the presence of media education in the communicative and pedagogical ecosystem of schools. Opportunities and challenges also challenge teacher education, including the initial and continuing education of teachers, educators, communicators, instructors and researchers in the effort to develop new methodologies and new connections. Here we see the need to understand the variety of approaches – media education and educommunication – and the plurality of concepts and experiences, and to recognize that media education is and should be an asset of each educator and their pedagogical posture, which transcends this field under construction.

In this landscape, the opportunities and limits indicated in this paper are highlighted by the importance of articulating teaching, research and extension in media educational experiences and of conducting studies in networks and partnerships that can strengthen a media education focused on citizenship. After all, if education for critical thinking requires greater reflexivity about cultural and media practices in the context of digital cultural, more than ever media education can contribute to the disruptive practices and forms of resistance that are now taking shape in Brazil.

The complexity of the issues reveals the need to rethink an agenda for media education that involves all those who are engaged with it in the country. Considering the objective of indicating the themes, challenges and attention faced by research and educational, media and cultural practices, the importance stands out of the political dimension, of public policies, teacher education, and the themes that studies in media education have addressed and the emerging themes that must still be addressed.

Thus, there are many challenges to consolidating media education in the different educational situations found in Brazil. The reflection on the specificities of each country – not simply to make comparisons but to identify contrasts – can present places where a unique history is being critically shaped with particular contours and a design that is always under construction. This can be found in Brazilian landscapes, portraits and narratives that have collective, multiple and plural authorships, in a
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Media educational horizon that is increasingly active in the realm of formal and informal education, and which are constructing new stories in the history of media education in Brazil.

Notes

1 Translated by Jeffrey Hoff. E-mail jeffhoff@floripa.com.br
2 In this letter, media-education is understood to be “an interdisciplinary field under construction, at the border between Education, Communication, Culture and Art, dedicated to reflection, research and intervention to encourage a critical and creative appropriation of the medias and the construction of citizenship”. Its presence in education is understood “as part of the system of education, in the activity of media producers, at communication companies and in civil society organizations (...) as an instrument for the defense of civil rights and the construction of citizenship” (Carta de Florianópolis para a mídia-educação in Girardello & Fantin, 2009, p. 161–162).
3 See https://www.governodigital.gov.br/cidadania/inclusao-digital/programa-de-inclusao-social-e-digital
4 It is important to mention other free communication networks although they are not directly situated in this field that is still under construction – which had important action in recent years, such as: the Mídia Ninja movement, Independent Narratives and Journalism and Action, which produce and distribute information based on new technologies with a collaborative perspective, defending the right to information, the public interest and cultural diversity, while addressing issues such as communication, culture, the environment, youth and other issues and challenges of the 21st century.
5 www.anped.org.br/
6 www.portalintercom.org.br/index.php

References


Media education in Chile over the last 30 years has taken place during a process of democratic recovery, where we find an increase of school coverage on the one hand, and the pursuit for higher educational quality on the other. In relation to the field of communication, we observe the absence of a state policy and the predominance of private media. Also, during this period, the population has increased their access to new digital technologies. In this context, the media education situation in Chile is governed by the digital literacy paradigm that in recent years has been questioned due to the low results obtained by students on international tests of digital competencies.

During the 1990s and the first half of 2000, the educational field concentrated on increasing its budget. This was done without touching the public schools' municipal system, where the state only had a guiding role. The participation of the private sector grew during this period due to the schools that were subsidized by the state. As of 2007, student enrollment in these schools exceeded that of municipal establishments. In 2016, 1,942,222 students were enrolled in subsidized schools, 1,273,530 in municipal schools, and 288,964 students in private schools (Mineduc, 2017b).

The government carried out an educational reform during the 1996–2000 period, which has as its central axis a constructivist curriculum, the professionalization of teachers, and the installation of a full school day.

In 2006, a process to pursue quality education began, leaving behind the goals of better coverage and resources from the previous period. The 2006 and 2011 student mobilizations demanded higher quality education, forcing the political system to seek solutions. Thus, during the 2011 and 2017 period, ten laws were approved that sought to improve the Chilean education situation.

In the communication field, the decision of the governments of the coalition of parties stands out, which decided that democracy does not have a communication policy, allowing the market to be the media...
regulator. Thus, a duopoly was consolidated in the written press, while state television (TVN) remained public but had to self-finance and compete with other channels for advertising.

Private channels and the rating appear (provided by the *people meter*) to largely determine the content of open-signal television.

Televisions are abundant in homes, especially in low socioeconomic sectors. In 2009, digital television began to operate. The presence of paid television and computers in homes increased. There was a massification of new technologies and the internet. In 2017, 35% of the population had a smart TV, and 67% had subscribed to an internet and cable television service (CNTV, 2018c).

Gaps in the access of some technologies have begun to decrease. In regard to paid television, the difference between the highest socioeconomic sector and the lowest one went from 70 to 44 percentage points between 2005 and 2017. The consumption gaps have become more sophisticated and are mostly due to age (CNTV, 2018c).

With this background, the authorities chose to take a digital leap and focus their efforts on the inclusion of information and communication technologies (ICT) in education because it was thought that digital language is closer to the literate culture of the school. In contrast, audiovisual material was seen as more familiar to teachers as viewers but not as content to produce or teach in the classroom (Fuenzalida, 2005).

*The Enlaces* program was launched in 1992 with the mission of “integrating ICT in the school system to achieve the improvement of learning and the development of digital skills among the different actors” (*Enlaces*, n.d.). It began as a pilot project and then became a government program that focused on the country’s technological leap, seeking to reduce digital gaps in rural and vulnerable sectors, and improve teachers’ perception of ICT. As a result, a hegemonic relationship between the media and schools was created through Enlaces’s promotion of digital literacy.

The state’s active role in the relationship between education and the media is determined by technology. The digital policy in Chile has promoted the *Enlaces* program, where schools need to apply to competitive projects that have certain requirements and limited resources.

Research has shown that more than half of Chilean students do not obtain the minimum scores needed in information management skills and the use of digital tools to share and collaborate (Mineduc, 2014). Other problems detected are the lack of depth and continuity of the projects, the lack of technical support, the lack of involvement of school directors, difficulties in accessing the internet, and poor support for teachers (Mineduc, 2017a).

Given these results, the Ministry of Education created an advisory board for the Digital Agenda in Education to propose a digital policy in school education. The strategic axis of the proposal is the relationship
between the students’ competences and teachers’ practices. The recommendations suggest that we must go from a stage of support to the different subjects of the curriculum to the learning experiences that prepare students for the knowledge society (Mineduc, 2017a).

The advisory council experts explained that the technological infrastructure achievements have not generated digital skills in students, due to the weak and unorganized nature of what has been done in schools. One of the most profound criticisms referred to the simplistic view about the incorporation of technology in schools.

*Enlaces* has probably shared the excessive optimism shown by other digital policies around the world, relying on promises of almost automatic educational transformation linked to the use of technologies, which, finally, has shown to be unrealistic. It has repeatedly been necessary to return to the starting point of a good education, which requires very good teachers to use technology, to innovate in the classroom, as well as prepare students for the 21st century. In education there are no shortcuts when preparing good teachers, nor when implementing technology [in schools].

(Mineduc, 2017a, p. 10)

The same year that *Enlaces* was created, the National Television Council Law (CNTV) was modified. The new council financed national audiovisual productions such as telefilms or television series and conducted research and projects on various topics, including education. CNTV gained public notoriety for being the regulating organism of television content, which allowed it to charge fines to the channels for its content. In the 2000s, it was the only state agency in charge of establishing education about mass media. However, this task was done with a limited budget and had little impact on students.

Another initiative was the proposal to design a communication policy for children and adolescents that was developed at the time with the support of the Undersecretary of Regional Development, the Senate, and the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile’s public policy program. The proposal sought to overcome the downfalls that Chile had in the matter (Condeza & Baeza, 2006).

### 5.2 Regulatory Framework

In Chile, there are no definitions or explicit references about media education. An approach is found in the way the cultural and educational television department of the National Television Council (CNTV) functions, which “fosters a critical, informed, and responsible citizenship that contributes to quality television and educated and active parental control in order to guide children’s television consumption” (CNTV, 2018a, p. 1).
CN TV’s interest in the presence of a cultural and educational program has allowed it to carry out media education actions. In the Community and Education section of their website, they define audiovisual media education as one that:

provides tools to understand and analyze audiovisual content - such as series, news, advertising or online videos - that we see on different screens. We intend for people to be able to properly manage information technologies, understand how and for what audiovisual [material] is produced, and critically analyze the messages they communicate.

(CNTV, 2018b, p. 1)

In the pedagogical booklets “I see, I see, what do you see?” distributed by this CNTV department, “Five key Questions That Can Change the World” are presented, which come from the Center Media Literacy’s Media Kit (CML, 2005): Who created the message? What creative techniques are used to attract attention? How can different people understand this message differently from how I do? What lifestyles, values and points of view are represented or omitted in this message? and Why was this message sent? (CNTV, 2014).

The mass media are mentioned in school curricula as having an auxiliary role in other subjects. “The media are treated mainly as a methodological resource to deepen other content” (De Fontcuberta, 2009, p. 204). Until the end of the 2000s, the study of the media was found in the Language and Communication area of the secondary education curricula, with its own axis along with oral communication, written communication, and literature. However, when reviewing the detail of the curricular proposal, in its activities and strategies, the axis of the media became an auxiliary or resource for the other three axes mentioned previously (De Fontcuberta & Guerrero, 2007).

In 2009, a curricular reform based on the competency-based learning model was implemented. This reform conceptualizes communicative competence as having curricular axes of oral communication, reading, and writing for primary and secondary education. The old axes plus other new ones are integrated as transversal and instrumental axes, among which we find the media.

With this reform, education related to the mass media was treated as a technical skill, following a functionalist-technological approach (Toro, 2016). The new curricular regulations clarified that the mass media are not a subject of study.

With respect to the media, one of the problems that the reform has intended to solve is one related to an error that has been generated in the system. Although the original intention of the reform was to
include them [the media] as support and context that gave importance to language, in practice this thematic axis became its specific study. The reform demonstrates that it is not about turning the media into an object of knowledge in and of itself, but about reflecting on the messages they propose, broadening the vision of the world, and using them as a pedagogical resource.

(Mineduc, 2009, p. 5)

With this clarification, media education in Chilean schools was postponed. “This curricular reform in the language and communication sector tends to dislodge the educational possibility of the study of the mass media and their media discourses” (Toro, 2016, p. 84).

In contrast, ICT have been gaining ground. Since 1998, they have been present in school programs when computer science was incorporated into secondary education (Enlaces, n.d.).

In 2009, ICTs were incorporated as a fundamental transversal objective of education in Chile. This objective sought for students to develop skills related to information literacy, how to search and access information, use applications to present and communicate ideas and arguments, and apply criteria for personal care and the care of others in the network (Mineduc, 2009, p. 26). These skills have since been evaluated through the Simce TIC (Information and Communication Technologies) tests and the International Computer and Information Literacy Study (ICILS) measurement, both with low results (Mineduc, 2017).

In addition, media education is not completely addressed in the education standards for teachers. In the case of early childhood education, Communication Skills Standard 8 states, “The child care educator who has completed initial training demonstrates the achievement of this standard when he/she can (...) [r]ead mass media messages critically” (Mineduc, 2012a, p. 33).

Another example of these approaches to media education appears in the standards of secondary education pedagogy teachers. Language and Communication Standard 3 indicates that in relation to the reading of the media, “the development of critical understanding of multimodal texts that circulate both in the private sphere and in the public” should be promoted. Standard 6 refers to the media’s expression, and states that the teacher must know “how to lead the design, production, and communication process of multimodal texts appropriate to diverse communicative situations” (Mineduc, 2012b, p. 76).

5.3 Institutions and Social Actors

At the state level, the main institution that promotes media education is the National Television Council (CNTV). Its educational action is not restricted to the television screen since, with the appearance of new
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media, it deals with the teaching and reflection of audiovisual content on different platforms. On its website you can find pedagogical education booklets on the media for different educational levels to work on the classroom. It also contains guidelines for families to reflect on their own media consumption and that of the children in the home. In addition, it has an educational children’s television with a large number of programs that are available on its website and which is also broadcasted on paid and open television.

From a reductionist perspective of media education, the Enlaces project is the most important initiative that links the new communication and education technologies as we have pointed out in the sociopolitical context of media education. It provides technology and training for teachers and students in municipal and subsidized schools.

In 2007, Enlaces published the documents *ICT competencies in the teaching profession*, for practicing teachers, and *Standards of ICT training*, aimed at pedagogy students (Mineduc, 2011). In coherence with the previous documents, the pedagogical standards, both for early childhood education and for secondary education, include as the seventh basic skill that teachers are required to master the use of ICT and information management (Mineduc, 2012a, 2012b).

In addition, schools can apply for projects that provide equipment, technological infrastructure, and connectivity through competitive funding. Enlaces projects include the delivery of tablets for children in municipal kindergartens (Enlaces, 2018a) and computers for municipal school seventh graders (12 years) and vulnerable students with good academic performance who attend subsidized schools (Enlaces, 2018b).

Since 2006, the National Cinematheque of Chile, at the La Moneda Palace’s Cultural Center Foundation, has been leading the *Escuela al Cine* project, in which film clubs from all over the country participate, and it intends to form school audiences for Chilean cinema and audiovisual material, in order to create audiences at an early age that in the medium term value national audiovisual creations. Since 2014, the project has been funded by the Ministry of Culture, Arts, and Heritage through competitive funds. As of July 2018, the program has 79 *Cine Clubes Escolares* (School Movie Clubs) in 14 regions of the country that are part of the *Red Cine Club Escolar* (School Movie Club Network). Every year, it trains approximately 80 teachers and around 2,000 students participate.

Along the same line, the Audiovisual Promotion Fund of the Ministry of Culture and the Arts began financing projects in 2017 to train the general public as well as children.

One of the cultural corporations that has obtained funds to develop this training is Fish Eye. This corporation began in 2011 as a film festival for children, and it has expanded its work to the exhibition of films for children and young people and promotes the audiovisual creation
of short films through training workshops for students and teachers. In 2017, it was present in 35 communes in 10 regions of Chile (Ojo de Pescado, 2017).

The creation of educational media in schools has been another way to promote media education. In the 1990s, the Press School program was developed by Claudio Avendaño in partnership with the Chilean Press Association. In the 2000s, Avendaño, a researcher from the Universidad Diego Portales, developed a school press project focusing on the internet, where the students and professors created an online informative medium. This project was innovative in the fact that it linked mass culture with education through topics that received considerable media coverage, such as the Olympics and the World Cup (Ceballos & Avendaño, 2012).

Since 2004, we find the El Mercurio de los Estudiantes (The Students’ El Mercurio) project, where students from seventh grade to tenth grade engage in journalistic work to publish an online newspaper with the support of the newspaper El Mercurio. Through this experience, they reflect on current events and produce news and opinion articles. In 14 years, more than 2,900 schools, 3,200 teachers, and 32,300 students from all over Chile (El Mercurio de los estudiantes, 2018) have participated.

There are two organizations that have focused their efforts on media education in rural schools across the country. One is the work of the Mediabus Foundation, where through media literacy and audiovisual production, innovation and educational inclusion are sought. One of its most outstanding lines of work is the School Stop Motion, which encourages the creation and dissemination of the students’ own messages through audiovisual works in the classroom with this animation technique (Stop Motion) (Fundación Mediabus, 2018).

The second outstanding project is that of Escuela Plus (School Plus). It is DirecTV’s educational television initiative that is present throughout Latin America. It has been present in Chile for 11 years and is sponsored by the Ministry of Education. It covers practically all rural schools and is used by approximately 3,500 educational communities throughout the country (Escuela plus, 2018a).

Within Escuela Plus, the Escuela inicial (Early Childhood Education) project, also known as Televisión infantil de calidad en el aula parvularia (Children's Quality Television in the Early Childhood Education Classroom), is in a pilot phase. Lead by Valerio Fuenzalida, in conjunction with the NGO Comunicación Ciudadana (Citizen Communication), this project creates high-quality children’s television programs in order to develop emotional intelligence competencies in children between 2 and 6 years old. The project includes the training of educators and families to work on the viewing of children’s programs and the development of media education activities in early childhood education classrooms. It has been developed in 23 early childhood education classrooms, benefiting more than 2,300 children (Escuela plus, 2018b).
Finally, we find the RedEducom led by Claudio Avendaño, which brings together public and private organizations, civil society organizations, and individuals working on the subject of communication and education in Chile. In October 2018, he held his third meeting where participants included all the people and organizations that carry out experiences in which they conversed about the world of media in education.

5.4 Teacher Training

The absence of media education in university undergraduate teacher training programs has been an issue in Chile. In 2006, De Fontcuberta, Fernández, Condeza, and Gálvez developed a study on the presence of media education in Chile, which included, among the variables studied, the initial teacher training curriculum. This research demonstrated the absence of media education in the plans and programs of studies and that the presence of educational technology was limited to the existence of classroom technologies in the curriculum (De Fontcuberta, 2009).

The Disciplinary Guiding Standards for the Pedagogy in Language and Communication majors present a media education through the media; that is, the media are seen as a methodological resource that are part of a teaching-learning strategy, which would correspond to a functional communicative approach to language (Toro, 2016).

On the other hand, in a recent investigation, it was demonstrated that the teachings addressed by the subjects in relation to the mass media, within the pedagogy majors in Chile, correspond mainly to learning about the media, while in some subjects such learning takes place by using them (Toro, 2016).

In the case of teacher training in early childhood education, it was found that the directors of early childhood education majors confuse ICT subjects with media education. In addition, the existence of a reductionism of this education to information literacy was demonstrated. The only subjects directly related to media education mainly address the dimension related to the use of technology by the media competition (Andrada, 2018).

This technology-focused vision can also be found in the distance courses offered by the Enlaces program and by the Center for Improvement, Experimentation, and Pedagogical Research of the Ministry of Education (CPEIP) for professional development training, which includes courses related to the use of ICT. These courses correspond to the ICT standards and competences developed by Enlaces (Mineduc, 2011).

At the graduate level, since 2001, the master’s program in Communication and Education, with an interdisciplinary emphasis, taught by the Communications Faculty at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile has included media education as an integral part of their program. This master’s degree is taught in association with the Diploma in Educational
Communication Strategies at the same university. There is a new option for a specialized, optional course on education in the media within that space that will begin to be taught during the first semester of 2019.

Also, the Diploma in Communication and Education was recently introduced by the Universidad Alberto Hurtado during the second semester of 2018. Although it does not specifically integrate media education as a specific course, the critical use of the media and social networks is promoted.

5.5 Academic Production

The academic production on media education in Chile experienced a large growth during the 1980s due to the work carried out by the Center for Cultural and Artistic Exploration and Expression (CENECA). This institution consolidated a line of research on television and education, based on the need for a critical reception of television to educate and prepare young audiences at a time when this medium was rapidly becoming widespread in the country.

One of its most prominent researchers is Valerio Fuenzalida, who has recently emphasized the importance of children’s television, making use of a constructivist perspective in his latest book: The New Children’s Television (2016).

The National Fund for Scientific and Technological Development (FONDECYT) is the main source of funding for communication studies. Another financing mechanism is the research line of the Audiovisual Fund, where reception studies are available. A third area linked to media education is the work developed by the departments of studies and international relations and cultural and educational television of the National Television Council (CNTV).

As a field, during the 2005–2017 period, resources were allocated to 13 FONDECYT projects that linked communication and education in some way. Among these we find research associated with media literacy, the use and appropriation of audiovisual media, interactivity and citizen educommunication, among others. In any case, it is necessary to clarify that this specific line of communication and education is addressed by a small number of researchers in Chile.

One of these scholars is Mar de Fontcuberta, who has developed a consistent line of research over time, including a master’s program in Communication and Education at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile. One of her most relevant projects is Evaluation of education in media in Chile. A proposal of criteria for the continuous training of language and communication teachers. The study focuses on secondary education. It intends to identify the errors made by teachers in relation to media education and proposes a training plan in this subject for Chilean language and communication teachers. A qualitative methodology is used, which
incorporates the analysis of the Chilean education curriculum, a questionnaire to Spanish language and communication teachers, participant observation, and semi-structured interviews with teachers, pedagogy major directors, and education department deans.

The results show that in formal instruction, there is no continuous media education plan across all stages of education, from early childhood education to university. Given this, it is noted that children and young people are familiar with the media since childhood, which makes it essential to introduce this content from the age of preschool, through a continuum that should go deeper and deeper through the scope of this minimum compulsory content.

(De Fontcuberta & Guerrero, 2007, pp. 93–94)

Other relevant and more recent FONDECYT research is media literacies and situated apprenticeships. Experiences of metropolitan adolescents in media production inside and outside the school (2014–2016) have been studied by Andrea Valdivia, a researcher at the Universidad de Chile. The purpose of this study was to examine the literacies and learning that Chilean adolescents develop when they participate in media production experiences, both in formal educational and informal media settings. Her methodology was inspired by school ethnography and virtual ethnography (netnography). Part of her results was published in Learning and digital media production at the school: An ethnographic approach to learning as a cultural practice in Visual Arts (Valdivia, Herrera, & Guerrero, 2015).

The article reviewed is a sample of the recent academic production on media education, which has become more and more important in the country, so much so that the most important communication magazine in Chile, Cuadernos.info, dedicated a special issue to it a few years ago (Condeza & de Fontcuberta, 2014). Other publications highlighted in this area are: News consumption of Chilean teenagers: Interests, motivations and perceptions about the information agenda (Condeza, Bachmann, & Mujica, 2014) and State of the issue of teacher education in media education (Andrada, 2015).

We also find two doctoral theses carried out in Barcelona, Spain, which study media education in Chile. The first one is Media education in the Chilean school system: Approaches and theoretical-methodological proposals of Critical Media Literacy by Barbara Toro (2016), which seeks to understand the foundations of the Chilean school curriculum in the area of language and communication, in relation to media education and, from this, expand this curriculum and teacher training in this area.

The second doctoral thesis is Media education in the training of children’s education professionals in Chile. Evaluation of curricula, beliefs and perception of media competence by Pablo Andrada (2018), whose
objective is to determine if media education is incorporated into the training given by teachers to university pre-service preschool teachers in Chile.

In addition, in recent years, research has been carried out that also tries to contribute to the study of the relationship between communication and education from the perspective of the mediation of education, where we find, for example, the project financed by the Audiovisual Fund’s research line: Training of television viewers of national television fiction: Characterization and teacher use, by researcher Lorena Antezana. The work included the development of pedagogical booklets to be applied at schools, about realities, docurealities, and series. These booklets explained the television format, the opportunities and risks of viewing it, and specific activities according to educational levels.

Another relevant project is The social discourse on teachers in Chile: Media and teacher identity in a mediated context (2018–2020), funded by FONDECYT and conducted by Cristian Cabalin. Its general objective is to analyze the discourses on teachers produced by the main national newspapers and their reception by professors in the context of the recent Teaching Career Law.

This project is in execution and has not yet published results. The study aims to expand on the relationship between media and education from a political and non-pedagogical dimension, in the traditional way in which that link has been analyzed in Chile – Educommunication – education for reception and media literacy are some examples of this current analysis. The mediatization of education, rather, is inscribed in the line of research of cultural studies in education, which proposes to analyze education beyond the school and in relation to social, cultural, political, and economic structures.

As we have briefly reviewed in this section, research on communication and education in Chile began to take shape in the 1980s, but it is still in development with a small number of researchers dedicated to its study. However, little by little it has gained complexity and has diversified its objects of analysis and its academic production.

5.6 General Appraisal

Media education in Chile is at a key moment. After a boom in educommunication in the 1980s led by the Ceneca group, the return of democracy was accompanied by a decline in the education of citizenship in relation to the media. There was an increase in the coverage of education and greater access to new technologies for the population. Educational authorities privileged investments in computers and connectivity in public schools through the Enlaces program, which led to a certain technological fetishism.

In correspondence with this decision, the curricular adjustment of 2009 clarified that in Language and Communication, the media are a
transversal axis and only a supporting resource. In this way, it became clear that the mass media are not an object of study but a tool to learn other subjects in the curriculum. This idea was consecrated, since in parallel ICTs are considered one of the transversal axes of education and are presented as a support asset for all areas of knowledge. This transversality has a concrete way of being evaluated through the Simce ICT and the ICILS test, in which Chilean students have had very low results. Digital hegemony has also been fostered through the publication of ICT standards and digital competences for teachers.

On the other hand, there is no state program or evaluation of the students’ media competence. The only state agency that specifically promotes education about the media is the National Television Council, which has limited impact on schools and the population in general. Despite focusing on television, it has recently broadened its interest in the audiovisual arena to different types of platforms, such as computers and cell phones.

Teacher training in specific media education is restricted to two particular initiatives, a long-standing one and another one that recently began in 2018. In a recent investigation, it was shown that in the initial training of teachers, the Language and Communication pedagogy students have courses where they receive training on the media and on the production of media, but later that training is not in line with the school curricula or the guiding standards for teachers. In the case of early childhood education, the directors of the major confuse media education with the teaching of ICT and the only subjects present that are related to media education correspond, precisely, to ICT subjects.

Academic production is incipient and still scarce. For a decade, it has had a new impulse derived from two media education research projects supported by FONDECYT. Also, the publication of a thematic number on communication and education in the main academic journal of communication reveals the relevance that this topic has acquired in the universities.

There are several organizations that work with media to achieve objectives related to curricular challenges and school coexistence. It is interesting to highlight the wide coverage of initiatives in rural schools as well as the formation carried out in film and audiovisual subjects among school audiences. Also noteworthy is the incipient formation of a network of organizations and people who work in media education in Chile.

Challenges exist in consolidating this network and others that allow for the coordination of the different public actors and civil society organizations that work in media education in Chile. Once this coordination is achieved, a common plan can be established that has specific objectives and leads to having citizens who have a critical relationship with the media and take advantage of them to express themselves.
Note

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6 Media education in Colombia. An inheritance with possibilities and challenges for the 21st century

Diego Leandro Marín Ossa

6.1 Socio-Political Context

Colombia is located in north-western South America, in a privileged spot for life with access to both oceans, Pacific and Atlantic; with a mountainous system stretching across the territory; a rich and diverse biological and food variety, born and reproduced in its valleys, plains and jungles such as the Amazon. It is a culturally exuberant country, product of its location on the planet and the mixture of indigenous Americans, Africans and Europeans, especially Spaniards.

After gaining its Independence from Spain in 1819, Colombia has been characterized by maintaining, on the basis of its wealth, one civil war after another (over ten of them), with periods of relative tranquillity which have sometimes been the product of political agreements (over ten different constitutions) between the actors in its armed conflicts, and moved on to other forms of dependency on governments aligned with power block policies, as happened during the Cold War or in the 1990s, when the country entered Globalization and took on the Neoliberal model without tackling some unresolved problems of the past, among other things because “over the course of the decade the structural problems of the nation persisted, economic crisis worsened, corruption increased, governance weakened and the force inherent to the armed conflict as well as violence grew unprecedentedly” (Castañeda, 2002, p. 25).

In this context, the press has played a leading role as one of the most influential media in the country since the 18th century, with a constant threat to freedom of expression, the murder of journalists and attacks on media such as the one on El Espectador, a newspaper characterized by its independence, which lives on and remains an influential paper despite the murder of its director Don Guillermo Cano and the bomb the drug mafia threw on its headquarters in 1989.

In the demographic aspect, Colombia went from having about five million inhabitants in the year 1900, most of them living in the rural sector, to having more than 37 million inhabitants according to the 1993 census and with 70% of that population concentrated in urban areas
(Rueda Plata, 1999). In that same period, almost a century later, the
general illiteracy rate in the adult population went from 66% (Ramírez-
Giraldo & Téllez-Corredor, 2006) to 9.3% according to the Ministry of
National Education (MEN, 2004).

Today the population is 45.5 million inhabitants, and, while the fact
that the phenomenon of illiteracy affecting mainly the rural population
and people over 40 years is a matter of concern, in a recent report the
government attributed to itself, as one of the achievements obtained in
the last years, a 65.73% growth in free access to education during the
period 2008–2016 and a reduction in the illiteracy rate that went from
7.10% in 2006 to 5.35% in 2016. This reduction has been lower in
women than in men (MEN, 2017).

Nevertheless, despite the advances in educational coverage, working
as a teacher is a high-risk job: “In Colombia, between 2009 and 2013,
140 teachers were killed, some 1,100 received death threats and 305
were forced to leave their homes because their lives were in danger”

Now, in what way does the geostrategic position of a country influ-
ence the media education of its population?

The multiple literacies that people require today depend also on
democratic access to the media. In this sense, the Colombian Feder-
ation of Journalists and the organization Reporters without Borders
(2015) state that, whereas the country has more than 200 radio sta-
tions, 650 community radios, over 50 television channels both public
and private, regional, community and local, more than 50 newspa-
pers, and new web portals, the pluralism of information is at risk
due to the level of penetration of the media belonging to the major
economic groups in households. In fact, by 2015, 57% of television,
radio and internet were already controlled by three economic groups
(Las 2 Orillas, 2015).

And whereas in 2018 61.4% of Colombians had access to the inter-
net (Revista Dinero, 2018), the audiences are not being educated and
the projects and plans to do so are still insufficient, and consequently
the country possesses the conditions necessary for media sensational-
ism and left- and right-wing demagogy to flourish, thanks to the use
of different advertising and propaganda strategies, while confidence in
the media weakens, falling in 2017 to 41% (Revista Dinero; 2017), and
while the most profound problems we have today in our society continue
unresolved.

Part of this problem can be solved through an equitable distribution
of the benefits generated from the diverse uses of the electromagnetic
spectrum, which constitutes one of our greatest riches. Nonetheless, we
are facing two possible paths: the concentration of the informational,
educational and entertainment power in the hands of the telecommu-
nications monopolies, or the democratization of communication.
And to finish with this brief context, it should be noted it is during the second half of the last century when the most important events, which have a varied influence on the media education of the country, occur: (1) The educational and cultural processes arise which despite being carried out with literacy, illustrative and moralizing intentions; (2) the beginning of an instrumental use of radio, television and films to spread the propaganda of the governments of the day, before, during and after the National Front; (3) the entertainment and information industry is torn between public and private; (4) the censorship and murder of journalists at the hands of armed groups and drug trafficking mafias affect the right to information; and (5) there is a transition from analogue to digital artefacts; and the first education laws that generate the possibility of institutionalizing media and Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) education arise.

6.2 Regulatory Framework

David Buckingham (2005) says that media education revolves around the development of people’s critical and creative capacities, which is the process of teaching and learning about the media, and that media literacy is the result expressed in knowledge, skills and competencies required for using and interpreting the media, but that it should not be confused with educational technology or pedagogical resources.

Based on this definition, the coordinates of a regulatory framework can be established, and to begin with, it is necessary to consider the Political Constitution of 1991 as a starting point, which assumes, on the one hand, that education is a right by means of which access to knowledge, science, technology, and other goods and values of culture is sought, so that illiteracy is eradicated (Articles 67–71). And, on the other hand, it gives every person the freedom to express and disseminate their thoughts and opinions, to inform and receive truthful and impartial information.

It is also pertinent to resort to Law 115 of 1994 with which two things were achieved: the compulsory and fundamental areas for basic education that comprise 80% of the curriculum were defined, including the Technology and Information Technology area, and the deepening in secondary education was established in order to foster students’ access to higher education. Hence, in some public and private institutions across the country, schools have subjects with emphasis on media, information technology and communication technologies.

This Law also facilitated the publication of documents with guidelines, quality standards and achievement indicators. An example of this is found in the Spanish Language area, the axes and processes of which are related to students’ semiotic, critical and ethical formation in relation to media and communication (MEN, 1998).
Subsequently it became necessary to resort to Law 30 of 1992 through which the Foundations for Higher Education were established. This law allows to design and implement academic and research training programmes in media education for professionals and teachers at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

And as a complement there is Resolution 2041 of 2016, through which the Ministry of National Education led Higher Education Institutions to provide extended practice hours in educator training, and grouped Bachelor’s Degree (teacher training), in the fundamental areas of Law 115, with the option for universities to provide an emphasis in their curricula, which may be in media education and Media and Information Literacy. The same resolution also retained the possibility of training graduates in Popular Education where media education would be particularly welcome with a focus on Educommunication.

Another series of documents that serve as reference are the reports corresponding to the Ten-Year Plans of Education which have gone through several stages: the first one that goes from 1996 to 2005 in which the government set itself as a goal the implementation and the use of new technologies with the aim of expanding coverage, improving quality, strengthening distance education to favour the population living in remote places, as well as promoting interactive learning, acquisition, updating, usage and dissemination of knowledge through the Internet (MEN, 2004).

The second one spanning from 2006 to 2016 in which various training purposes were included, among which was the pedagogical renewal and use of ICT in education. During this period, Guide 30 (MEN, 2008) was published, which, insufficient as it may be, represents an advance as far as reference materials for teachers of elementary and secondary education, in relation to the general guidelines for technology education.

A few years ago, another phase began with the Ten-Year Education Plan 2016–2026. In tune with the World Forum on Education held in Dakar (Senegal) in 2000, six central objectives were agreed upon within the framework of the initiative Education for All (EPT, 2016–2026), among which is the commitment to promote the relevant, pedagogical and generalized use of new and diverse technologies to support education, knowledge construction, learning, research and innovation, strengthening development for life. Recently, with Colombia’s entry into the OECD, additional guidelines have been drawn up for the country.

Part of the results and the application of these regulations in terms of media and ICT can be retrieved from the report on Information and Communications Technologies, which limits itself to enquiring about the uses of educational technology.

The document states that by the year 2017, 37.5% of the educational centres from the official sector (55,187), and 30.7% of the non-official centres used ICT for the teaching of curricular contents in the network (intranet), 30.6% located in urban areas and 39.8% in rural areas;
36.6% of the official centres and 45.0% of the non-official centres used them to consult pedagogical content, 43.9% located in urban areas and 34.6% located in rural areas; and 26.0% of the official centres and 24.3% of the non-official centres used them for learning and evaluation of learning through the virtual platform, 25.4% located in urban areas and 25.7% in rural areas (DANE, 2018).

And the other document that is useful for understanding the challenges of media education is the Technical Bulletin of Basic Indicators of Information and Communication Technologies Tenure and Use, product of a survey of 13,034 households with people over five years old. This report states that, in 2017, 44.3% of households owned a desktop, laptop or tablet computer; 93.9% of the total Colombian households owned conventional colour television; in 96.4% of households at least one person owned a cell phone; and 50.0% of households had a fixed Internet connection at the national level (DANE, 2018).

It is also stated that 81.7% of people use the Internet at home, with a lower percentage at work and in the educational institution they attend. Further, 81.5% use the Internet to access social networks, with a lower percentage for mail and messaging or to obtain information and only 6.7% for educational and learning purposes.

From these reports, it is self-evident that the percentage of institutions, households and people in the country that use the media and ICTs to educate, learn, evaluate or consult curricular content is still very low, and although more than 90% of the population has access to television, cell phones and the Internet, people use these means and technologies to be in contact with members of the family, friends and people related to their work, rather than with the purpose of learning something or educating themselves.

### 6.3 Institutions or Social Actors

After the arrival of the press in the country in the 18th century, of the other media in the 20th century, and the beginning of journalism classes at the Pontifical Xaverian University in 1936, Communication Programs come to life and with them a series of experiences characterized by the instrumental use of media where the audiences become the literacy object, and yet they cannot still be considered as part of media education. Among the most relevant are Radio Sutatenza (1947), Teleclases (1955) and Baccalaureate by radio (1967), focussed on Communication for Development (Beltrán, 2006). These processes can be consulted in the Archive of Memory Sign (Bautista, 2017a; 2017b).

Another experience that went further back then was that of the Cine Club Colombia (1949), which triggered the construction of the District Cinematheque and the formation of “cultured” publics with an enlightened focus on university projects throughout the country.
In the 1990s, new media and education projects emerged, such as Prensa Escuela, the product of an agreement signed in 1993 between Andiarios, the Organization of Ibero-American States (OEI) and the Ministry of National Education, created with the objective of using the newspaper and its contents in a transversal way across different areas of school education.

In 2004, the Educational Portal Colombia Aprende was put into operation, and the Computadores para Educar (CPE) programme through Decree 2324 from the year 2000 was inspired by Computers for Schools, a project that the government of those years came across in Canada around 1999. And if in the beginning CPE had the objective of collecting computers written off by public and private companies, to adapt them and install them in educational institutions throughout the country, in the report presented before the Congress of the Republic in 2017, one could already mention results in several areas: access to ICT, educational training, environmental use and strategic direction (MinTIC, 2017).

The achievements of CPE made the Ministry of Technologies and Communications (MinTIC) give continuity to the project and implement the Vive Digital Plan, through which the government set out to “reduce poverty, create jobs, and develop solutions for Colombia’s people’s problems, through the strategic use of technology”, and for this the Ministry of Information and Communications Technologies worked between 2014 and 2018 on four fronts: Employment, City and Region, Education and Entrepreneurship and Digital Government (MinTIC, 2010).

In addition, the strategy En Tic Confio was launched, with which the Ministry promoted the responsible use of the Internet, but particularly the prevention of sexual abuse and digital coexistence, for which it uses social networks, the portal and the Cathedra of the project.

A more recent development was the creation of the Digital Citizenship ecosystem (2016), which offers a space to learn, certify and “get in touch with other people interested in digitally and productively transforming their lives” through educational Digital Literacy content offered on its platform.

6.4 Teacher Training

In 2013, the Edumedia-3 research group and seedbed emerged as a training process. It is part of the Universidad Tecnológica Pereira, of the Faculty of Education Sciences and of the Spanish Language and Audio-visual Communication School, and a member of the Global Alliance for Partnerships on Media and Information Literacy (GAPMIL) of UNESCO.

This group offers, through its news portal, media with contents for scientific and educational dissemination; the development of training and research projects in media, communication, autobiography and education; repository with books, articles, papers and other open-access resources; and together with the Communication and Education Office
of the Autonomous University of Barcelona and the Degree in Educommunication from the Communications and Arts School of the University of Sao Paulo, it is developing the international seminar on research and creation that is part of the project: the autobiographical story as a method for the development of reflective and expressive skills of the media competence, which benefits and articulates three universities in three countries: Spain, Brazil and Colombia.

A particular case is offered by the Technological University of Pereira with its bachelor’s programme in technology with emphasis on communication and educational informatics created in 2002, where the area of media and education, as well as some subjects from the communication and technology axes, is focussed on media education.

To give two examples, the video and television courses are developed over a semester with an intensity of 4 contact hours per week and are addressed based on the theory and methodologies existing in media education, both for the development of reflective and expressive skills through content as well as for audio-visual production with an educational and cultural focus.

From there some educational and research processes arise, such as the 9 chapters of the Ciudad 45 magazine, a polychromatic look (2014–2016), the series of educational commercials Toma el Control (Take Control) made around the same time and the series of autobiographical videos focussed on research-creation and on the audio-visual competence. This is a process which since 2006 has been widely disseminated in Colombia, Guatemala, El Salvador, Argentina and Spain with a master’s thesis, a doctoral dissertation in course and publications of articles and book chapters in Brazil.

It is also important to highlight the fact that, at the undergraduate level, the Universidad del Valle has a 20-year-old undergraduate programme in Popular Education, in which they develop education processes for the media based on the educommunicative approach.

In addition to this in Colombia, postgraduate programmes have been created “distributed as follows: 94% masters and 6% doctorates; 82% out of which are communication programs” and others on digital communication, 47% of them in Bogotá, 29% in Medellín, 12% in Barranquilla and 6% distributed between Cali and Pereira (Sánchez, Alomía, & Toro, 2016, p. 37), with curricula, theses and some research works approached from education with the media and for the media or from some of the dimensions of the media competence (Ferrés & Piscitelli, 2012), although sometimes do not make this relationship explicit.

6.5 Academic Production

One of the publications contributing to current media education is Jesús Martín Barbero’s. He is the author of the book De los medios a las
mediaciones (From Media to Mediations) (1987), a thesis with which the Colombian-Spanish thinker gave a turn to effect theories, in order to accentuate the social and anthropological dimensions of reception and audiences in social, family, urban, youth and school contexts, in a quest to overcome the instrumental conceptions of the media and the developmental vision of governments and institutions devoted to providing their educational communities with artefacts, investigating the roots of popular culture, the culture industry and the mechanisms of hegemony and integration in Latin America.

Another reflection arises with the 1991 Political Constitution of Colombia, when the report made by the Committee of Wise Persons was published under the title Colombia on the edge of opportunity, which brought together thinkers such as Gabriel García Márquez, Rodolfo Llinás, Carlos Eduardo Vasco and Manuel Elkin Patarroyo, a document that highlights, among other things, the importance of “the information revolution, the versatility and influence of telecommunications and social communication media” (Aldana and others, 1996), both in present and in future education.

It is also important to point out that, parallel to the opening to educational informatics, the view of educational communication was consolidated from the field of social communication. This view was not limited to the use of media strategies, advertising and propaganda. And in this regard, we can mention one of the most important texts produced in Colombia in the framework of this continental discussion, entitled Communication – Education. Coordinates, Approaches and Journeys, which in its prologue by Carlos Eduardo Valderrama (2000) states that the work carried out in this field has been developed in three major areas: Education for reception, Communication in education, and Education and new technologies; each of them, with different perspectives, practices and ethical-political interests, sometimes exclusive and contradictory, other times complementary (p. 9). Valderrama highlights critical reading of the media, active reception, Media Literacy studies, and audience education as part of the first field. The second part is student training through pedagogical models, the semiotic approach, cultural studies and communication, and alternative and dialogical education. The former emphasize autonomy, the relational, participatory and creative character in education. The third area is educational technology that largely focusses on the instructional nature, encourages creativity and recommends that teachers take student knowledge into account. This in turn focusses on the student’s active role in the pedagogical process, and the interactive possibilities provided by technologies, hypertext and hypermedia, “the new languages and literacy, the generational and communicational gap, the new socio-cultural identities, among other aspects” (Valderrama, 2000, p. 15).
By the same author and at the end of the first decade of the 21st century, the article “Research within the media in Colombia (1980–2009)”, published in the Nómadas magazine issue number 31, reviews the main trends, thematic, theoretical and methodological of such works as well as some aspects of their production in temporal and spatial terms in eight Colombian cities: Barranquilla, Bogota, Cali, Cartagena, Manizales, Medellín, Pereira and Tunja (Valderrama, 2009); the author groups work into eight thematic axes: reception studies, history of the media, culture industry, media and education, media and politics, media, culture and society, public politics and media production.

Another significant contribution is the report on “Media Education and nation project in Colombia”, made by Ancízar Narváez Montoya for the Faculty of Education of the National Pedagogical University, in which he investigates the contribution of audio-visual media to the shaping of the nation in the Colombian experience, both from the territorial and sociocultural point of view, and characterizes the nation project that is promoted through the stories and discourses of the audio-visual media (Narváez Montoya, 2007, p. 4).

In “Keys to recognizing the levels of critical audio-visual reading in the child”, Jacqueline Sánchez-Carrero and Yamile Sandoval-Romero (2012) outline three media education experiences made in Venezuela, Colombia and Spain from the critical reception approach, and indicators that lead to determine the levels of critical audio-visual reading in children between 8 and 12 years old are provided.

In the publication of “Perspectives 2016. Technology and pedagogy in the classroom. The immediate future in Colombia” by Pérez Tornero, J. M., Pi, M, Tejedor, S., Durán, T., & Campuzano, C. (2016), a study carried out by the Communication and Education Office of the Autonomous University of Barcelona, the authors anticipate what is coming for the country in terms of educational technology, and try to understand the changes that the innovations derived from the inclusion of new processes and technological advances will impose on the national educational system.

Another article that stands out is “Interaction in educommunicative platforms. Reflection on typologies and usability. The Case of Colombia”, in which the authors present an extensive study on these initiatives with the aim of analysing the typology and uses of the different attributes that facilitate interaction with end users. The sample that makes up the study includes three website categories: formal education sites, informal education sites and other types of sites offering educational content,

(Durán Becerra & Tejedor Calvo, 2017, p. 261)

and reflects on the differences between the different types of actors that make up this landscape of online educommunicative services from the
following components: dialogical, interactive, appropriation, creativity/creation, critical understanding and modernization.

In terms of events, the following can be underlined: the Gathering organized by the Colombian Association of Researchers in Communication in Bucaramanga; the 2019 Congress organized in Medellín by the Euro-American Interuniversity Network for Research on Media Competencies for Citizenship – Alfamed; the Communicative Thinking Colloquium organized by the Doctorate in Educational Sciences and the Master in Communication and Educational Communication of the Technological University of Pereira; and the reflection dedicated to media education within the congress of the International Association for Media and Communication Research – IAMCR from the year 2017.

Finally, it is important to highlight the scientific dissemination process by magazines such as *Signo y Pensamiento*, *Palabra Clave* and *Nómadas y Miradas*, publications that have been generating memory for decades and making theoretical and methodological contributions that emerge from the relationships between media and education, even though they do not yet have an issue devoted exclusively to media education.

### 6.6 General Appraisal

How can we generate in Colombia a greater awareness of the role played by the media in our lives, and how they influence our decisions, what we think and feel, and what we can do to improve the world in which we live?

Regarding the regulatory framework, it is necessary to:

- Create within the Departmental Assemblies and the Municipal Councils, as part of a public policy, the possibility of an academic or technical baccalaureate with an emphasis in media education.
- Legislate and protect the resources allocated to public television and public radio against the private ones, especially the regional, community and university ones with an educational and cultural focus, without prejudicing their contents and autonomy.
- Legislate and regulate the social networks use to protect human rights, without prejudicing freedom of expression, the right to privacy and the right to information.

Regarding institutions and social actors, it is required:

- A broad discussion to put on the public agenda the advances that exist today related to media education, new literacies and media and digital skills.
- To strengthen networks, research groups and events dedicated to promoting and reflecting on media education with the participation
and contributions of the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of ICT.

- To stimulate research, production and dissemination of educational and cultural content, oriented to the media education of citizens through the calls from the National Television Authority (ANTV in Spanish), the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation (COLCIENCIAS in Spanish), the Ministry of Culture, Proimágenes en Movimiento, the Ministry of ICT and the Ministry of Education.

- To promote media education for parents and children around community projects and schools and colleges located within the communities.

- To generate a public debate that contributes to innovating the approach to information and the editorial line of the media, as well as the role of journalists as builders of public opinion and wardens of the public powers.

Regarding teacher training we must:

- Create teacher training programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate level dedicated to media education and Media and Information Literacy.

- Update the booklet on technology, and the creation of curricular guidelines and standards adapted to the needs of media education in the country, in which the results of studies and publications produced by research groups at a national and global level can be included, such as the Global Alliance for Partnerships on Media and Information Literacy GAPMIL-UNESCO MIL curriculum.

- Reformulate the entrance exams to the teaching career for the area of Technology and Informatics, because now they are designed in such a way that they are directed more to technologists or computer systems engineers than to media and ICT educators.

- Persist in the education of critical and proactive citizens, skilled in interpreting and creating contents that are useful to strengthen democracy.

One of the ways to generate relevant training processes in the national and international context involves knowing the media experience that people have had throughout their lives, and for this the autobiographical story as a method for introducing people to the development of reflective and expressive skills of media competence is one of the ways.

On the one hand, it is a method in which professors and students participate in the investigation and creation of the project, the roles are conserved but their relationship is modified, some of them are subjectivities, they feel, they think, they act, they communicate and they immerse themselves in the subject of study which is their own lives. On the other
hand, the story is the mediator of the media experience, and from this teachers and students discover particular situations and relationships of similarity and difference, but also get to identify what can be changed in the history of their relationship with the media, their habits, preferences, routines, rituals and many other things.

The result stems from each person’s experience, based upon different points of view, different versions, with nuances and compelling truths about what has happened in the country and in the world in relation to our life and the media. And for both teachers and students, the method is a permanent liberating technology, which allows each person to preserve or transform their view and even their life story.

From then on, social changes can be undertaken at the individual and collective levels, since autobiographical mediation (Marín Ossa, 2018) is just the starting point of media education, and constitutes the expression of an audio-visual democracy (Verón, 2001), to combat cognitive injustices (De Sousa Santos, B., & Meneses, M. P., 2014), by making use of the right to the screen (De Oliveira, 2008), in the context of a new humanism (Pérez Tornero & Varis, 2012).

Note

1 Translated by José Miguel Ramírez G.; style review by Cristina Botero Salazar.

References


7 Media education in Ecuador. Exploration and description of a latent need

Catalina González Cabrera and Cecilia Ugalde

7.1 Socio-Political Context

Ecuador is the most densely populated country in South America with 57 inhabitants per square kilometre (Indexmundi, 2018), and it is ranked seventh when considering the total population in South America, containing 17 million inhabitants according to projections of the National Institute of Statistics and Census, INEC (Ecuador en cifras, 2018). Catalogued by the international monetary fund as an emerging economy, Ecuador is ranked as the eighth economy in Latin America (World Economic, 2018).

It should be noted that, due to high oil prices, between 2006 and 2014, Ecuador experienced significant growth, which allowed higher public spending; poverty reduction; and, consequently, according to data provided by the World Bank (2018), a reduction in the Gini inequality coefficient. However, the fall in oil prices, the earthquake of April 2016 and the appreciation of the US dollar – a currency that Ecuador utilizes since 2000 as a result of serious political and economic problems – are some of the causes of a new economic crisis that has been aggravated by political conflicts and high-profile cases of corruption; a crisis that is reflected, among other things, in the reduction of public investment. Much of the physical and technological infrastructure endowment for Ecuadorian educational institutions was financed with resources from the rise in oil prices, resources that have now decreased and that consequently reflect a reduction in investment for this purpose.

With the economic growth that Ecuador experienced, the use of information and communication technologies also increased. This is reflected in the technological equipment at home where 26% have laptops, 26% desktop computers and 89% of Ecuadorian households have television, it should be noted that 56% of these have access to open signal, and 54% have digital coverage. Regarding internet access, although in Ecuador there is a 91% of internet coverage, and internet penetration in households barely reaches 37%, while bandwidth internet is at 8%. On the other hand, 9 out of 10 households in the country have at least one cell
phone, of these 37% are smart phones; in addition, 32% of Ecuadorians access social media from their mobile phones.

Also, in recent years the percentage of digital illiterates has dropped in Ecuador. INEC considers a digital illiterate as someone who does not have an activated cell phone, and has not used a computer or internet in the last year. In 2012, 21.4% of the population were digital illiterates, and currently, only 10.5% is digital illiterate.

Besides the aforementioned conditions, others are added to prepare a way for improvement in the Ecuadorian media education; next, we analyse some of them.

### 7.2 Regulatory Framework

Ecuador, like several of the countries that signed the agreement to comply with the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, aims to improve education in general and access to technology in particular. In this way, Ecuadorians can be equipped with the necessary tools to participate, create, access, understand and evaluate information from traditional and from digital media.

The Montecristi Constitution of 2008 is the foundation of the society that the Ecuadorian government wants to achieve. In the fifth section on “Education”, Art. 27 rules:

> Education will focus on the human being and guarantee its holistic development, within the framework of respect for human rights, sustainable environment and democracy; it will be participatory, mandatory, intercultural, democratic, inclusive and diverse, of quality and warmth; will promote gender equity, justice, solidarity and peace; it will stimulate critical thinking, art and physical culture, individual and collective initiative, and the development of skills and abilities to create and work.

> Education is essential for knowledge, the exercise of rights and the construction of a sovereign country, and constitutes a strategic axis for national development.

(Asamblea Nacional de la República del Ecuador, 2008)

In this trend, stimulating the critical sense has been part of the country’s objectives for some years, as well as eradicating digital illiteracy to overcome the educational backwardness of the most disadvantaged by facilitating them Information and Communications Technology, ICT access. For this, the Ecuadorian Constitution in its article 347, numerals 7 and 8, establishes as State responsibilities:

7. Eradicate pure, functional and digital illiteracy, and support the processes of post-literacy and adults’ permanent education, and overcoming the educational backwardness.
8. Include information and communication technologies in the educational process and promote the link between education and productive or social activities.

(Asamblea Nacional de la República del Ecuador, 2008, p. 156)

These state responsibilities are displayed in the Organic Law of Intercultural Education, LOEI, which, in its second chapter, sixth article, literals i and j, states that the State has the following obligations:

i. Promote the processes of permanent education for adults and the eradication of pure, functional and digital illiteracy, and overcoming the educational backwardness.

j. Guarantee digital literacy and the use of information and communication technologies in the educational process, and promote the link of teaching with productive or social activities.

(Asamblea Nacional del Ecuador, 2011, p. 12)

The National Development Plan 2017–2021, on the other hand, has as one of its policies to “Promote research, education, training, development and technology transfer…” (SENPLADES, 2017, p. 83) and as one of its goals “to increase the Information and Communication Technologies Development Index by 2021 from 4.6 to 5.6” (SENPLADES, 2017, p. 83). This goal, despite being very conservative, is a concrete goal that as part of the National Development Plan, is covered by the constitution. Article 280 states as follows:

The National Development Plan is the instrument to which public policies, programs and projects will be subject. Also, the programming and execution of the State budget, the investment and allocation of public resources and the coordination of the exclusive competences between the government and the decentralized autonomous governments have to be checked with the National Development Plan. Its observance will be mandatory for the public sector and indicative for other sectors.

(Asamblea Nacional de la República del Ecuador, 2008)

The Ministry of Education of Ecuador has established the Digital Educational Agenda 2017–2021, in order to strengthen and enhance the teaching-learning process in the National Education System through the increase of innovative practices that integrate technologies to empower the learning, knowledge and participation. This agenda aims to bring the traditional school to the knowledge society, transforming it into a digital school, for which the following guidelines are proposed:

- Provide internet connectivity to all public educational institutions in the country.
• Develop innovative pedagogical practices with a digital approach.
• Develop digital skills of teachers in training and in-service.
• Spread ideas, advances, achievements and new knowledge through effective, transparent and understandable communication to the society (academic community, research community and general public).
• Build an innovative infrastructure in digital education.
• Protect digital intellectual production. (Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador, 2017, p. 17)

However, the *Libro Blanco de la Sociedad de la Información y del Conocimiento* (White Paper on the Information and Knowledge Society), prepared by the Ministry of Telecommunications and the Information Society (Ministerio de Telecomunicaciones y de la Sociedad de la Información, 2018b), in its conclusions, points out that there are still important digital gaps that must be addressed as priority by the Ecuadorian Government. It should be noted that this book reflects the current state of ICT development in Ecuador in several areas, and in its diagnosis the low penetration of mobile devices due to high import tariffs has been observed, and the need for improvement in the management of information security both in the academic world and in Ecuadorian companies.

On the other hand, the Organic Law of Communication approved on 14 June 2013, states that the media must produce and disseminate educational content that encourages national production, inclusion, interculturality, citizen participation, diversity, values, national identity, respect and care for nature, and the promotion of human rights. They should also promote the exchange of information and knowledge, science and technology, cultural and artistic expressions (Asamblea Nacional de la República del Ecuador, 2013). Even in this Communication Law, in its article 71 on common responsibilities of the media, the “Tend to educomunication” appears. That is, develop it in schools, through the following actions: Connectivity and ICT use in public education establishments; consolidation and deepening of digital literacy processes; and teacher training in digital literacy processes (Marín Gutiérrez, Rivera Rogel, & Celly Alvarado, 2014).

It is observed that Ecuador has a normative framework that favours the promotion of media literacy with a view to greater citizen integration to technology and critical participation that respects, among other things, identity, values and human rights, and that regulations are channelled at the state level mainly through the Digital Educational Agenda of the Ministry of Education with its five axes (digital learning, physical infrastructure, teaching development, communication and promotion, and innovation), of which the physical infrastructure axis aims to provide connectivity and equipment to public education institutions in the country, has been implemented for some years and is possibly the closest
to reach. In the coming years we will see the degree of compliance with this agenda, to which annual evaluations will be carried out.

Finally, it should be noted that within the curricular content of public schools in Ecuador, cross-cutting educational objectives are proposed that seek, above all, to use ICT resources as a means of communication, learning and thought development, access to digital resources, yield criteria for source reliability analysis, speech support with audio-visual productions, recreate read or heard texts through the use of diverse media and resources (including ICT), among other aspects (Ministerio de Educación, 2018). In other words, despite not having a subject that is specifically called “media literacy”, students are taught contents that aim to develop skills and competences in the area of media and digital literacy.

7.3 Institutions and Social Actors

As the regulations show, it is in the government’s interest to provide media education for the population, which, due to its resources and scope, makes it its main promoter. Universities also promote media education, especially through research, but also through community projects, which are product of applied research.

However, sometimes these two actors join, as for example, in 2009, when the Ecuadorian government – through its Ministry of Education and Culture, with the Escuela Politécnica del Litoral (ESPOL) and Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja (UTPL) – developed a programme for ICTs to be progressively integrated into schools (Marín Gutiérrez et al., 2014).

Currently, the government’s contribution is mainly focussed on digital education, for which it has developed public policies in order that citizens have better services of information and communication technologies that contribute to a better quality of life, and for this purpose, through the Ministry of Telecommunications and Information Society, MINTEL (Ministerio de Telecomunicaciones y de la Sociedad de la Información, 2018), it has given access to ICT through equipment and internet connectivity in 6,700 educational institutions, where more than 1,400,000 students and more than 50,000 teachers have access to the internet.

Besides the impulse in infrastructure for educational institutions, the government proposes within its Digital Educational Agenda an axis of digital learning that proposes an educational transformation through the digital culture for what it conceives a new online curriculum that is constantly transformed and upgraded. Some of this curriculum contents have been worked out in agreement with UNESCO, and the micro-curricular designs established by the Ministry of Education are being developed with the cooperation of some universities. Within this same
axis of digital learning, the Ecuadorian government proposes a pedagogical methodology focussed on Educommunication, as mentioned in the Digital Educational Agenda:

Digital, audiovisual, multimedia and transmedia education is required; for this it is necessary to comply with digital literacy processes. This refers to the development of skills to locate, organise, understand, evaluate and analyse information using digital technology in order to promote a society with sovereignty over their knowledge. It is not enough to know how to read the new communication codes, it is also necessary to write in these new languages. Educommunication is responsible for this, which provides a critical, pragmatic and significant pedagogical approach.

(Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador, 2017, p. 28)

The Ministry of Education is also promoting a programme for the development of digital educational resources, with several projects such as *El Cuento Karaoke* (the Karaoke tale), *Audiolibro* (Audiobook), *Profe Youtuber*, *audio-visual laboratory* and *mobile audio-visual laboratory*. However, there are no public results of the application of these resources.

Another government project is the so-called *Community Info-centre Project*, which with 854 technological spaces allows citizens of rural and urban-marginal sectors of Ecuador to use the internet free of charge, along with training courses that allow users to have more and better job opportunities. According to MINTEL (2018), community info-centres have been the main tool to reduce digital illiteracy and promote the use of new technologies; in fact, more than seven million users have visited the info-centres, and more than 315,000 ICT training certificates have been delivered.

As already mentioned, Ecuadorian universities contribute to training for ICT use, and to media literacy education, while researching their impact. Currently, researchers from several Ecuadorian universities are part of the Euro-American Interuniversity Network of Research on Media Competences for Citizenship, AlfaMed, which is chaired by Ignacio Aguaded, professor at the University of Huelva (UHU) (Spain). This network brings together more than 50 researchers from 13 European and Latin American countries. The main objective is to strengthen academic activities, research, extension, production and dissemination on media education.

Many of the contributions in the development of training for ICT use and media education in Ecuador are precisely actions developed by university researchers, some of which are part of the AlfaMed network. Some of these actions are linked to a national project called *Media Competencies from young people, teachers and parents of public and private educational institutions of Ecuador* that was born in 2012,
Many of the contributions developed by Ecuadorian researchers have had local or regional scope, especially in the south of the country (Cuenca, Loja and Zamora). Unfortunately, they have not had more follow up in order to determine the most successful practices with longitudinal studies.

In this sense, a greater synchronicity between the efforts of the universities and the government is recommended, so the government can put into practice processes already proven successful by the universities, and as such elaborate action plans for social changes through public policies. These plans should use tools developed and tested by universities, and respond to real needs identified through various studies in which scientists from several universities often participate.

Finally, through isolated actions to meet their Corporate Social Responsibility strategies, private companies have dedicated digital and media literacy workshops on the good use of social networks and cybersecurity. This is the case with Facebook, who has trained members of NGOs with good practices to promote social projects through its platform.

7.4 Teacher Training

The online learning platform Educar Ecuador is, like several other online learning platforms in Latin America, part of the Network of Educational Portals (RELPE, in Spanish). The community is present in the network through its educational portal (https://www.educarecuador.gob.ec) since 2014. It is a space that provides virtual educational services for teachers, students and parents.

Among the teachers’ resources, there are several tools that facilitate their daily work, from making forums to registering tasks, as well as creating specific shared content folders for each course. Through the management utilities of the platform, parents have the option to consult their children academic records, as well as to manage communications with the school. While students can consult evaluation reports, see tasks by subject, interact with other classmates and download class material. The main objective of the platform is to provide the educational community with tools to learn while interacting through ICT.

As Durán (2016) points out, although this initiative does not establish strategies for the study of media or other prominent elements in media
literacy education, it does represent a remarkable advance in digital literacy in the country, for students, teachers and parents. It opens a window to update knowledge for all of them.

On the other hand, the teaching development is another axis of the Digital Educational Agenda, which aims to develop specific guidelines in the teacher training system of the country to progressively improve the quality of education in the teaching-learning processes. This is how this axis aims to generate teacher training processes in ICT – TLK (Technologies of learning and knowledge) and TEP (Technologies of empowerment and participation) innovation strategies to develop skills that allow teachers the competence to include technology in the classroom. Due to the different levels of knowledge of teachers, among other things, the implementation phase of ICT in education, following the model proposed by UNESCO, consists of four stages: (i) emerge, (ii) apply, (iii) integrate and (iv) transform (Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador, 2017).

Thus, the government hopes to train teachers with knowledge in Information and Communication Technologies, TLK and TEP, which implies a great effort to achieve the development of these skills, even more so if we bear in mind that the vast majority of teachers immersed in the initial and middle education system of Ecuador have not had much training in the mentioned areas. This is how the government, through the redesign of education careers in universities, has included the necessary content so that new teachers have the required skills within their initial training. Also, there is a continuous training and professionalization programme to train teachers who do not have the required knowledge yet.

In this sense it should be mentioned that studies show that less than 20% of Ecuadorian teachers have not received training in audio-visual communication; however, only a third of all teachers use new technologies as learning tools (Rivera, Ugalde, González, & Salinas, 2016; Ugalde & González, 2017); these studies also show that in general terms the media competence of Ecuadorian teachers is average, and in real terms it may be even lower since the measurement tool used is self-perceptive, and therefore, it is subject to a greater margin of error.

The few training programmes to improve media competence of middle and high school teachers have had great acceptance. When interviewing their participants, we found much interest and desire to learn. There is an unmet need and a desire to reduce the digital divide between teachers, mostly digital migrants, and their students, digital natives. This situation presents great opportunities and challenges for the State and for the academy.

7.5 Academic Production

On the Web of Science webpage, we can find articles published with the quality indicator JCR (Journal Citation Reports). For this research
report, we proceeded to search for publications on “media literacy”, “media competence” and “Ecuador” without year limit. The search engine only released two JCR articles:


2 Study on audio-visual competence training of teachers and students in southern Ecuador. *Estudio sobre formación en competencia audiovisual de profesores y estudiantes en el sur de Ecuador* (Marín Gutiérrez et al., 2014).

So only two studies were published in high-impact journals. This is a clear sign of the scarcity in production and scientific dissemination that the country suffers, especially when considering that this website collects the references of the main scientific publications of any discipline of knowledge since 1945.

On the other hand, the same search with the same parameters, but this time in the Scopus database, showed five publications, some of which are communications in congresses indexed in this database.


2 Media competences in Loja students. *Competencias mediáticas en el alumnado en la ciudad de Loja* (Ecuador) (Marín, Rivera, & Velásquez, 2015).


4 Use that Ecuadorian teachers and students give to Information and Communication Technologies. *Uso que profesores y estudiantes ecuatorianos dan a las Tecnologías de la Información y la Comunicación* (Rivera et al., 2016).

5 *Inequality in ICT Access and Its Influence on Media Competency* (González-Cabrera, & Ugalde, 2016).

Also, it is worth highlighting that *Chasqui, Revista Latinoamericana de Comunicación*, created and edited by the International Centre for Advanced Communication Studies in Latin America (CIESPAL, in Spanish)
in 2013 published a specialized issue on media literacy (number 124): *The social role of media education*. This issue specifically disseminated research around the concept of media competence, with comparative analysis between studies in Europe and Latin America. Fifteen publications, including essays, articles, reports and reviews, can be found (see more in: http://dx.doi.org/10.16921/chasqui.v0i124). At the moment, another issue dedicated to media or digital literacy has not been published.

With this, it is evident that the scientific production of subjects related to media competence and/or media literacy in Ecuador in high-impact publications is incipient. It is found that the universities most linked to the research of these subjects, the Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja and the Universidad del Azuay, have reports on several research projects on the subject, as well as a book (Ugalde & González, 2017), several book chapters (Marín-Gutiérrez, Rivera-Rogel, Mier, & Velásquez, 2016, Mendoza, Marín-Gutiérrez, & Rivera-Rogel, 2018, Rivera-Rogel, Velásquez, Marín-Gutiérrez, Mier, & Celly, 2015; Rivera, Ugalde, González-Cabrera, & Carrión, 2015; Ugalde & González, 2016) and numerous graduate and postgraduate theses.

The financing of these research projects comes mostly from the universities themselves. In addition to the two private universities mentioned, public universities have also participated, such as Universidad Central, Universidad de Cuenca and Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro, in which case the funding comes from the State.

At the time of writing this chapter there is a project to organize an international congress on media competence in Ecuador with the support of the government and some universities and private institutions by 2020. In fact, the proposal already has part of its funding. If carried out, it would be the first event of this magnitude on the Ecuadorian territory.

### 7.6 General Appraisal

Regarding education in media literacy, Ecuadorian researchers have evaluated the level of media competence of students, teachers and parents of public and private educational institutions in Ecuador. It could be pointed out that the level of ICT management of Ecuadorian students is medium; in addition, both teachers and students have deficiencies in the use and application of media and technological resources (Rivera et al., 2017).

In this regard, Ecuador lacks research validating media literacy interventions. Only descriptive studies and correlations have been carried out to make known the level of “media competence” of young people, teachers and parents. However, empirical research has not been carried out to demonstrate what influences a media literacy education intervention to have a positive and effective impact on the education of young people.
Also, it has not been possible to find information about projects that coach in media literacy, and there is still a lack of dissemination of projects that are born in universities. These projects usually last a short time and have no continuity. The training offered by the government is mostly limited to ICT introduction, and basic use of some of its tools, although some are already beginning to have a media literacy orientation.

Solely access to technology is not enough, and an appropriate training is essential to achieve high levels of media education. Research shows that students can perform some activities, such as internet searches; however, they are not efficient in doing so, they waste time, they misuse keywords, they do not discern valid sources from bad ones, etc. Results show the need for training with an integrating and critical perspective.

It is of vital importance to carry out an impact study after each intervention, project or education programme in media literacy, to know what factors intervene so that the students are more critical, capable and participative with media. Only through longitudinal studies we could learn about changes in abilities and skills from young people. Unfortunately, Ecuador does not have this type of studies, a fact that hinders the work of researchers who need previous steps to continue.

With all that has been said, it can be concluded that, despite the many problems, there are favourable conditions for media education to be integrated into the reality of the Ecuadorian school system. It is certainly a long process, which implies permanent effort, but which is necessary if the population is to be ready not to face the future, but the present.

Note

1 Network created by agreement of the Ministers of Education of 16 Latin American countries (see more in https://www.oei.es/historico/relpe.php).

References

Catalina González Cabrera and Cecilia Ugalde


8 Media education in El Salvador. Slow-paced footsteps on the way to media literacy

Amparo Marroquín Parducci, Willian Carballo, and Nelly Chévez

8.1 Socio-Political Context

El Salvador is a small country located at the center of Latin America. A pass-through country for many, it is located in the most important corridor of human mobility of the world. Each year, thousands of people go through that human corridor trying to get to the United States. As many States of Central America, it has suffered the consequences of the military dictatorships, a civil war that lasted for over a decade and a set of Peace Accords that little by little managed to rearrange the level of violence between groups such as the gangs and the organized crime. From that standpoint and with the permission of corrupt leaders and populist pacts, El Salvador has turned into one of the most violent countries of the region.

Almost all of the spheres of the Salvadoran reality have an inflection point on January 16, 1992, when the Peace Accords were signed in order to put an end to an internal war that lasted 12 years. Just as it happens with migration and violence, and with arts and politics, to explain the media education factor in this Central American country is an initiative inevitably connected with that groundbreaking moment of the national history. Since the 1970s and 1980s—when a portion of the social movement chose to arm itself in order to face what they considered to be an oppressive and an impoverishing government—the mass media were experiencing a couple of very specific events. On the one hand, the large media corporations, which in reality were not fully developed by then, responded to both the interests of the economically powerful families and the right wing’s ideological mindset. Many of these media corporations, forced by the government, even had to be part of a “cadena” during the war. From a practical perspective, this was what Martín-Baró (1981) used to call an attempt to “impose a monophonic voice to the population” (p. 18). On the other hand, a real sense of freedom of expression was definitively not there, mostly because of the authoritarian culture inherited from the military dictatorships. Because of this situation, many independent small media companies and journalists were
attacked – death followed as a consequence in some cases – others were kidnapped, some of those media companies were being closed, and others, mostly the ones that belonged to the guerrilla had to get used to remain under the shadows (Cortina, 2015).

These conditions, following Martín-Baró (1981), contributed to the creation of “an information fence”. This suffocating environment generated a certain control over the information that was reported to the audiences and discouraged dissent. This is why one of the main characteristics of the 1980s and the first portion of the 1990s was an audience that had already gotten used to receiving information and the same type of analysis that came mostly from the field of journalism, contents that were almost uncritical when it came to discussing the factual powers.

By the early 1990s, and after a long process of negotiation, the first government of Alianza Republicana Nacionalista (Arena) and the guerrilla, unified inside the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN), managed to reach an agreement. In this context, the Peace Accords were signed by January 1992. The process of peace brought along a series of elements that would become the key aspects of the years that followed. In the area of politics, the revolutionary forces of the Frente became a party, and a new organization that regulated the election process was created as well; in the institutional field, the Office of the Procurator for the Protection of Human Rights (Procuraduría para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos) came to life, and also a new police force that, contrary to its predecessors, should now embody a civilian concept.

There were also some transformations in the field of communications. Some of them had to do with the law; others – less noticeable and more relaxed – occurred in a natural way as the country left the bullets behind and reached a state of peace. However, some of the structural aspects remained the same, and others became even more intense.

Among the most important transformations that took place, the accords that were signed in Chapultepec, Mexico, acknowledged the existence of the radio stations, Radio Venceremos y Radio Farabundo Martí, which the FMLN had created during the conflict and that were conducted in secrecy. The accords also gave them a license to operate. The former guerrilla was also able to get other radio and television frequencies that, after some time, they would rent or sell for business purposes. These concessions, however, and at least in paper, meant the opening of a counterweight system before the presence of the traditional media. As Iglesias sums it up (2014): “The doors were opened to those who in the past did not have the means to make their voices and their opinions heard” (Iglesias, 2014, p. 36).

This effort, nevertheless, was not enough. The Peace Accords did not observe the situation of the mass media system from an integral perspective, or the mechanisms to transform its structure. Even if several
people who were repatriated, after staying in the neighboring countries, established their homes in different communities and founded local participative radio stations, the negotiations between the government and the FMLN never contemplated as an option to establish a legal status for these radio stations, in the concept of what theory calls “the third sector”, that is, the media that belong to a community (the others are either the commercial media or the public communication media). In fact, by the mid-1990s, these stations were labeled as illegal and they were victims of persecution (Pérez & Carballo, 2013).

In addition to this, in the following years a series of neoliberal reforms took place which consolidated the concentration of the media in just a few hands. The most important reform was the Telecommunications Law, approved in 1997. Among other issues, under this regulation, an auction was established as the method to obtain a radio or a television frequency; in other words, only those who had enough financial resources to compete could actually get one.

In the new millennium, a process of consolidation came along for the large media companies. They belonged to the wealthiest families, and started purchasing more radio and television frequencies, until they gradually became robust corporations with a wider amount of contents to offer; however, they always had a commercial purpose. By the second decade of the 21st century, for instance, almost half of the television frequencies that worked at a national level was in the hands of the Telecorporación Salvadoreña (TCS) or in the hands some of its closest shareholders; while as for the radio, out of the total amount of frequencies that had a national reach, a 58% was in the hands of just six powerful business groups (Pérez & Carballo, 2013). In addition to this, the largest newspapers also belonged to three of the wealthiest families of the country. As different authors have mentioned it (Mastrini & Becerra, 2009; Pérez & Carballo, 2013), many properties belonged to different families at the same time and there was a direct relationship between owners of the media and governing politicians. A very clear example of this situation is that most of the shares of the country’s largest radio corporation (because of the number of radio stations that it has and its audience levels), the Samix Group, belong to the former president of El Salvador, Elías Antonio Saca. This former official confessed before the presence of a judge in 2018 that he used his position to bring economic benefits to his radio stations.

What about the public media? In El Salvador, they are no more than governmental informative divisions. The station that should be, for instance, the public television channel (TV 10), actually depends on the presidency of the republic. Other entities, such as the Armed Forces or the Legislative Assembly also count with their own television channels and radio stations; however, once again, they basically have an institutional profile.
To the present date, in the field of the media system prevails a scene where very few tell a lot of people what the news is and what is not, what is entertainment, what to listen and what to watch. And even if the new technologies have reconfigured in a great deal the way in which the citizens have access to information and have made possible the emergence of new media formats, the truth is that the percentage of people with access to the Internet is still very small (29%, according to the ICT Development Index 2017). This is how in the circle of the traditional media, the largest commercial portions of it are still in the hands of just a few people.

Despite these rather pessimistic considerations, the transformation that took place in matters of freedom of expression since 1992 is undeniable. Because of the need to offer a set of possibilities for the FMLN to participate as a political party, the accords guaranteed that the FMLN would have the “freedom to publish paid newspaper ads in the mass media”. In addition to this, it was also left in writing that “the right of all people to associate freely for ideological, religious, political, economic, work, social, cultural and sporting purposes, or of any other kind” would be granted. Both statements, in practical terms, meant that there could be publications or media that would have opinions which could be different from the ones of the right wing, and that under no circumstance should they be harassed, attacked or closed down. This is how the postwar period made it possible to have a higher degree of freedom of expression. Singers, song writers, columnists, journalists, communication media and the population in general were benefited from the break with this veil of censorship which prevailed during the past decades.

In the specific case of the media, this meant, most of all, a new era for the field of journalism. Even inside the traditional newspapers, new groups of reporters emerged. They were also the result of the recently created communication faculties that belonged to the private universities. These reporters started publishing pieces of information that were more critical towards the subjects related to power. Research magazines were created, promoting the publication of feature stories which uncovered corruption cases or revealed social issues that were not visible at the time.

However, it is necessary to acknowledge the fact that, at the same time, journalism also turned into one of the main accomplices in the creation of stereotyped narratives about juvenile violence and the vision that whoever fights against this problem deserves the votes (Marroquín, 2007). This discourse about “villains and heroes” would end up feeding the counterproductive repressive measures promoted by different governments since the Peace Accords to this day, through news that have also had an impact already in many of the readers who support the idea of putting an end to violence with more violence (Carballo, 2016; Marroquín, 2016).
By the late 1990s, the emerging communication technologies also allowed that a group of editors and reporters were able to found *El Faro*. A digital newspaper that years later would stand out because of its work in the field of investigative journalism and would also create its own office with a news ombudsman. In the new century, the possibilities offered by the Internet created an opportunity for the emergence of many more digital media. However, it is also true that a door was opened for the creation of the so-called digital newspapers. The name of the owners of these newspapers has not been revealed and, according to the information provided by the Political Communication Observatory (Observatorio de Comunicación Política), a project of both the Universidad Centroamericana and the Escuela Mónica Herrera, in the context of the municipal and legislative elections of 2017, these newspapers did not always meet some of the basic standards of journalism, such as the contrast between different sources and the adequate coverage of the news, and the contents were only used for electoral means.

Because of all of these factors, the Salvadoran audiences are now before the presence of a complex panorama that rests on top of all of those processes that were affected by the war and the postwar period. On the one hand, a media system designed for purely commercial purposes owned by groups that hold the economic power, groups that keep many connecting links with a political power that became stronger after 1992; and, on the other hand, a much more consolidated freedom of expression than that of the 1980s. We have already mentioned that not everyone has access to the Internet; however, the consumption of the services provided by it keeps increasing, and cell phones are now the devices where all media converge. By 2016, El Salvador already had an amount of 147 registered cell phones for every 100 people. In El Salvador, people have more mobile phones than television sets, gas stoves, irons, refrigerators, blenders or sound systems (Cea, 2017). And despite this type of consumption, media literacy is incipient. We go into the details of this subject in the following pages.

### 8.2 Regulatory Framework

The same context derived from the Peace Accords makes out of El Salvador a country looking to achieve a strong framework as part of its objectives. This is not always possible; as we have already mentioned it, in many occasions, the legal constructions that are born are also subordinated to short-term interests and to a degree of discretionality that we will not discuss in this chapter. Nevertheless, this chapter does offer an exhaustive study of the normative frameworks of a country that counts with several advanced law proposals, but the concreteness of these proposals, as we will see in Chapter 3, still has many shortcomings.
Media education or media literacy? Ferrés and Masanet (2015) present what they refer to as a “terminological chaos” because of the diversity of terms available to refer to the issue of media literacy, such as: media education, media oriented education, educcommunication, education in the field of audiovisual communication, media literacy, multi-literacy, information literacy, new literacy, digital literacy, multiple literacy and transliteracy. In the documents that will be discussed in this study, any of these terms will be used, in the sense that they will be conceived as synonymous with media literacy. In this sense, it is understood that media literacy (or any of the synonyms that we have listed) intends to develop skills to interact with the diverse communication media available, not only as users or consumers, but also as critical and responsible producers of contents and formats.

This study begins with the review of the Constitution of the Republic of El Salvador, created in 1983, and considered as a fundamental normative framework of the Salvadoran State. The laws and the regulations connected with the fields of education and the science were also reviewed: the General Education Law of El Salvador (Ley general de Educación, 1996); the General Regulation of the Higher Education Law (Ley de Educación Superior, 2004); el Reglamento General de la Ley de Educación Superior (2009); the Special Regulation on Long Distance Learning in Higher Education (Reglamento Especial de la Educación No Presencial en la Educación Superior, 2012) and the Law of Scientific and Technological Development (Ley de Desarrollo Científico y Tecnológico, 2013). This study is interested in establishing whether the subject of media literacy is taken into consideration in these policies, norms and official documents; what perspective is used to interpret it; and whether it is just centered in the consumption of media or in the development of the necessary skills in order that the citizenry, in an active and responsible manner, is able to know the media’s diverse formats, analyze them from a critical perspective and become producers of contents, particularly at this time with all of the possibilities that the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) offer for the fields of education and science.

The Constitución de la República de El Salvador (1983) establishes that education is understood as a mechanism that promotes the integral development of people, although it does not explicitly mention the rational-cognitive dimension of it, only spirituals, morals and social aspects. However, in reference to the level of access to public education at all stages, the Constitution only points out as a right and as a duty the access to public education when it comes to the preschool stage. Out of the 12 times in which the term “education” appears in the document, none refers to the communication media.

The term “literacy” appears only once in the different chapters and sections, and it is not used in an explicit manner in relation to the communication media. The communication media as such appears in the
curriculum as a reflection that needs to be connected to social sciences. However, this idea is not explicitly developed and it is just there for the teachers to consider if they can use it in reference to anything in particular. The formal concern with the topic dilutes the possibility of a reflective study of the media’s reality in the region. In fact, when the laws of education are reviewed, the absence of a reflection about the communication media becomes quite a significant aspect of this issue.

For instance, the General Law of Education defines education from a broad and integral perspective of continuous training and multiple dimensions. Both modalities of formal and non-formal education are acknowledged by this Law.

When the Law refers to literacy, it defines it in a generic fashion, as a process connected with both reading and writing in Article 15: “a process of social interest, therefore, it is declared as a factor of public value and it will hold the character of a priority as a program inside the education system”. Literacy is also mentioned when referring to adult education in Article 33. It does not mention the communication media at all.

It is not until the objectives of basic education are mentioned that it is considered how these could become the foundation for the necessary skills in the field of media literacy. As an example, some of the objectives of basic education mentioned in Article 21 are: (a) To develop skills that favor an efficient performance in daily life through the knowledge of scientific, humanistic and technological disciplines as well as those disciplines related to art; (b) To increase the capability of observing, remembering, imagining, analyzing, reasoning and deciding; (c) To improve the necessary skills for a correct use of the different means of expression and comprehension; and (d) To contribute to an autodidactic development in order to have a successful improvement in the processes of change and permanent education.

In addition to this, the area of Higher Education of this country, in 82 articles, mentions the communication media just once and not in the sense of developing skills related to this field, but about the homologation of foreign academic degrees that have used the communication media in the education process that they follow, as mentioned in Article 20:

Homologation involves the recognition of the academic validity in the professional studies that have been carried out abroad or served in the country by foreign institutions, by the use of technological means of communication; in the last case, the foreign higher education institutions must be accredited in the country of origin by legally acknowledged agencies.

(Mined, 1995)

The General Regulation of the Higher Education Law (2009) does not mention the term “literacy” in general; it does not mention media
literacy, or any of the terms related to the subject. This Regulation mentions several areas of knowledge that must be present in all of the study plans designed for the careers that belong to the field of higher education. These areas are: English and Spanish; computing studies, ethics, environmental education, human rights, inclusive education, risk and disaster reduction management, and family and gender-based violence prevention. From this, it can be inferred that the communication media are not mentioned; the ICT are not explicitly mentioned either, only the term “computing” in more of an instrumental sense of the word.

In the Law of Scientific and Technological Development (2013), it is not possible to identify the terms related to media education or any synonyms for the subject; the development of media and digital skills was not there either, even if the objective is to “establish the guidelines for the development of science and technology through the definition of the fundamental institutional and operational instruments and mechanisms”. Among the priorities of the National Plan of Science and Technology, the “use” of the ICT is mentioned once again. However, among the priorities, the development of media or digital skills is not explicitly mentioned.

In the documents that contain the regulations, or in the Teacher Training National Plan (Plan Nacional de Formación de Docentes), the terms related to media education or media skills are not explicitly mentioned. However, from the integral perspective of the legal frameworks that regulate education, there is the possibility of introducing this topic. There are areas that are actual opportunities to overcome the treatment of this subject, limited to a technological vision, and conceive media literacy inside the Salvadoran education system from the perspective of the rights of the citizenry in terms of the construction, as the Constitution puts it, of a democratic, successful, fair and human society. We will cover the issue of training in the following chapter.

8.3 Institutions and Social Actors

Media literacy is an issue that has been outside the radar of the different types of institutions that are part of the Salvadoran society. Neither the Non-Governmental Organizations nor the branches of the State, and definitively not the private business companies, have paid attention to this matter.

The first evidence that has been found is in the area of ICT. This is where several governmental education programs that explicitly take into consideration both the development of the necessary skills to use the ICT and teacher training activities are in effect.

The programs Expansion of the Information and Communications Technology and a responsible use (Ensanche de las Tecnologías de la
Amparo Marroquín Parducci et al.

Información y comunicación y su uso responsable) mention the development of skills “in an efficient use of technology”. Its objective is the following:

To contribute to the quality of secondary education through teacher training activities and pedagogical innovation supported by the ICT, with the purpose of promoting that the students gain skills to efficiently use these technologies in order to support the economic, social, scientific and technological development of El Salvador.

According to its official site, this program is aimed to teachers and students of 380 secondary education institutions. It includes teachers, students, parents and community members. It refers to a “technological literacy” and not to a media or digital literacy; however, it does include in its description a certain progress in the conception of other dimensions, such as a responsible use of the ICT.

The program called “Una Niña, Un Niño, Una Computadora” (2015) focuses on providing teachers and students from rural schools with computing equipment and promoting a responsible use of the ICT. The document of the program describes its purpose as reducing the digital gap, through the access to the ICT and a responsible management of this practice (Viceministerio de Ciencia y Tecnología, 2015, p. 1).

This program explicitly considers the development of technological skills in students and teachers. It textually indicates that

It is intended to develop technological skills in the students which will help them to strengthen their abilities, their study habits, the development of logical thinking and the capacity to have a safe access to the places where information and knowledge are.

(Viceministerio de Ciencia y Tecnología, 2015, p. 7)

Despite the above, when it comes to describing the methodology that will be used by the teachers, the document does not explicitly consider the development of skills, and it does not explain how to achieve such goals in terms of overcoming the dimensions that are purely technological.

In the case of the communication media, a key actor in this subject, the only exception to the rule has been the digital newspaper El Faro. This is a well-known newspaper because many of its journalists have been awarded in Latin America and in the rest of the world; it has developed at least a couple of projects that are considered as pioneering efforts in the field of journalism in El Salvador.

The first initiative is a series of workshops called “Journalism for non-journalists”. Ricardo Vaquerano, who was the editor of El Faro until 2017, was in charge of this project. In the present time, he is an
independent editor for the Revista Factum. The project consisted in offering a practical training to the readers of the newspaper who were interested in learning about the craft. The intention was to “create a more demanding audience in order to promote a better exercise of journalism”, explains Vaquerano in a conversation held through digital messaging.

They held seven workshops between 2010 and 2017. Each one had an average of ten participants who happened to be professionals that belonged to different fields which had nothing to do with journalism. They reviewed contents such as: ontology and journalism (why does a journalist exist and what is his or her role), and the techniques used by journalism (genres, principles and criteria). They also worked in the creation of a newsroom, where they had to design a coverage pattern of the news in El Salvador.

The facilitator proposed the creation of a “media monitoring system” in order to closely follow the work published by the different informative media companies of the country. They developed their skills, but because of the large amount of work that they had to accomplish, this effort did not go beyond the workshop itself.

Another innovative initiative – at least for the country – led by El Faro was the creation of an office for a news ombudsman. This office opened on June 1, 2018, and Chilean journalist, Mónica González, is in charge. The objective of this office, according to the press release that El Faro published that day, is to represent the readers by questioning and evaluating the performance of the newspaper, and in relation to the comments or complaints that they send.

The present editor, Daniel Valencia, was interviewed for this chapter, and he indicated that the idea is to give voice to a critical community that discusses different issues, participates and questions the reporters. “We hope they help us grow with their critical insights, with the way they question ideas, and with their demanding attitude. For us, those are firm steps that make us stronger”, our source indicated.

Since then, the news ombudsman from El Faro receives and channels the critics and the concerns of the audience, and the she sends them to the newsroom. These opinions get to González through an email account that she has exclusive access to. The journalists also let her know about other comments that people make, for instance, through the social networks. Then she decides what kind of demands she has to work with or what kind of issues she has to talk about in her articles, and she has the authority to demand from the journalists, the editors or from the management office of El Faro the information or the explanations that she thinks are necessary to evaluate the performance of the newsroom.

(Labrador, 2018)
El Faro has published important works about political corruption, immigration and violence. Many raved about these publications; but the paper has also been under constant scrutiny by their growing amount of well-informed readers. This audience is always aware about the balance of the published information, the quality of the sources or the relevance of the issues that the paper investigates, among other aspects.

Out of the experiences of educommunication that have been documented, many are linked to confessional spaces, as in the particular case of the Salesian-inspired Universidad Don Bosco and the Hijas de María Auxiliadora. They have activities documented in their pages related to educommunication as a specific kind of work at certain moments. In the case of the Hijas de María Auxiliadora, they indicate that their departure point has to do with promoting a culture of encounters. Their seminar, which took place in the Dominican Republic during 2016, indicates among its objectives the intention to share good educommunication practices and review the training itineraries; however, there are no specific reflections about the media, but they do mention the ICT. In the case of the Universidad Don Bosco, it is indicated that in 2016 they held a workshop about “educommunication in times of mobile devices, connectivity and social media”; the professors of communication led the way, and students who belong to the University’s different careers participated in this activity. Once again, the media do not appear as the protagonists of these initiatives. The objective was to “enable the participation of the citizenry through the educational use of the social networks”.

A reflection about subjects connected with both the discourse and the logic of the media is still absent. As we have already indicated, even if the Salvadoran State counts with the legal conditions for such task, it is important to mention that it has not been officially promoted.

8.4 Teacher Training

In terms of the legal framework, teacher training activities in the public sector are part of the Plan Nacional de Formación de Docentes en el sector Público 2015–2019 (Ministerio de Educación, 2014). This Training Plan presents itself as a “continuous training plan” for the staffs of teachers that belong to different levels and categories. The general objective of the Plan is focused on developing the skills of the teachers (Ministerio de Educación, 2014, p. 11).

It is mentioned that one of the problems of the teaching standards is that “Traditionally, the teacher training programs are strictly adjusted to the national education curriculum, a factor that becomes an obstacle to improve the level of knowledge of the different disciplines” (Mined, 2014, p. 22). The document mentions that “There is not enough scientific spirit or enough rigor in the teacher training methods, and the result
is the mechanization of the teaching career”, among other problems that affect the academic quality. It also mentions that

The system [...] has given up on providing its teachers with the basic knowledge to develop a deserving academic career; with this, both the scientific and the technological gaps grow larger, and keep us away from the initiatives that take place in the rest of the world.

(p. 22)

Even if these problems are listed, there are no explicit references to the fact that the development of skills in using the media and the digital mechanisms contributes to improving the quality of education through the ICT.

When the document mentions the “Teaching model that the system requires”, it refers to technical strengths such as the ability to use technology and proficiency in the English language. This is a technical point of view, and not an integral perspective about the development of skills. In reference to this, the document indicates: as any other academician committed to the cultivation of the scientific, the artistic or the humanistic disciplines, the teacher must be trained to be proficient in English and prepared to use technology in the sense that this creates an academic and a scientific communication, as basic instruments for the development of academic work. Both technology and the English language have turned into essential tools for any of the daily activities of a teacher (Mined, 2014, p. 26).

The document indicates that the characteristics of the teacher training model are: the use of digital connectivity and the capacity to provide the teachers with a scientific and a technological perspective and an innovative sense of task management. Once again, although the document acknowledges the importance of using the ICT in the field of teaching, the training approach does not show an explicit discussion about the development of media or digital literacy beyond a technical use. In other words, the Plan Nacional de Formación Docente does not discuss the development of other areas of skills in addition to those related to the technological abilities. Ferrés and Piscitelli (2012) propose the following areas: language, interaction processes, production processes, information distribution, ideology, principles and aesthetics (p. 21).

8.5 Academic Production

In El Salvador the voice of the academia does not play a starring role, the research processes and the critical dialogues just stand aside. This is even more evident after reviewing the discussion agenda of Latin America, where the situation of the country and the Central American region in general is usually not among the topics. Media literacy is
not the exception. There are spaces such as opinion columns or blogs from which several Salvadoran researchers and thinkers such as Mario Alfredo Cantarero or Marvin Galeas alert the people about the media discourse; other contents are published in the communication media, and they can be considered as emerging topics that discuss the problem of media literacy.

Even when the information gathering process has been particularly complicated, this part of the study is where we have found more silence, and voices have been almost absent. In the case of the academic texts, there is nothing explicit about the need to reflect upon the education process of the audiences, except for a bachelor’s thesis from the Universidad de El Salvador which examines the topic of organizational communication as a tool for the first stages of education (Berrios, Contreras, & Miranda, 2012).

8.6 General Appraisal

After this first journey through such an important subject, we can say that El Salvador is a country with a high degree of media consumption, but without the necessary education to move forward and become an audience that enjoys contents from an informed and a critical perspective. We underline three initial elements in an assessment about media literacy in the Salvadoran society. The first one is the most evident one: there are not that many experiences in terms of a reflection process or practices in regard to educommunication, even though the field of communication is a very popular subject, and the country counts at least with 14 bachelor’s degree programs in communication. Higher degrees are more likely to belong to areas such as public relations, marketing, organizational communication and journalism. The importance of reflecting along with the audiences and educating society in relation to the symbolic construction processes that the communication media follow is a situation that has not been understood. A hypothesis that we want to present is that this problem has to do with a couple of relevant factors: on the one hand, there is little concern about the communication processes, and this topic has not been reviewed from a critical perspective yet; on the other hand, it is even more alarming when it comes to mind that there actually are certain political interests on the table which, in order to sustain a populist debate about communication, do not choose to support the education processes of the society.

The second aspect to consider is that in those spaces where the most fragile sectors of the State’s institutional framework are, it is the civil society and most of the time, in the case of El Salvador, the religious institutions, the ones that work on an agenda of media education as a possibility to have an impact on society; however, this initiative is neither a formal nor a permanent program.
The third element here is not an observation but a commitment; as we were working on this mapping exercise, we realized that the great absentee in this discussion is educommunication. As professors and researchers interested in contributing with our work to the development of society, we explicitly state here our commitment with the promotion of the first project of educommunication in the country; we believe that research is also about this.

Notes

1 The authors thank Nataly Guzmán Velasco for her meticulous professionalism in translating this text and her rigorous editing advice in this project.

2 Just a few television news programs, a couple of large newspapers with national circulation, two smaller newspapers, two educational television channels and almost no other sort of development related to media narratives beyond the field of journalism.

3 In El Salvador, the media were part of a “cadena” (a chain) when they all had to interrupt their regular programming in order to present the same message.

4 Las Hijas de María Auxiliadora documented a seminar about educommunication, where the Salvadoran people participated, in this site: http://www.antillasfma.org/i-seminario-de-educomunicacion/ and the Universidad Don Bosco mentions a workshop about the subject, in 2016; however, its institutional page did not register this activity: http://www.udb.edu.sv/udb/index.php/publicaciones/noticia/748


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Media education in Mexico. For the formation of a critic citizenship

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The philosophical function of education consists in promoting expressions and forms of culture for men and women in particular historical contexts. Thus, education is the instrument for the people to attribute “the weight and extension that correspond to every idea, author or experience” (Soto & Bernardini, 2004, p. 16), with the purpose of analysing the context through the ability to think. In this sense, in the knowledge society, framed by a scientific-technological revolution, education needs media literacy. This new literacy or education for media should be presented in every moment of the citizens in the 21st century.

The education for the media and information (Lozano, 2006) – one of the ways that the active audience formation has been called since its origin in the decade of the 1980s, even though it referred to television audience only – is a holistic concept that integrates all the abilities of knowledge and skills related to all the literacy centred in the media. In this sense, “promoting a single literacy or a single set of abilities without integrating it in the widest context of the Media and Information Literacy (MIL) is not either useful or efficient” (Frau-Meigs, Flores Michel, & Velez, 2014, p. 1).

Under this framework, the authors clarify that the concept of media education – from which this work is based on – is oriented towards a critical formation of the contents in different platforms that promote a reflexive society. Therefore, a merely technological competence-oriented education is not analysed in this chapter.

9.1 Socio-Political Context

Mexico is a Federal Republic with a democratic regime established on the Mexican Constitution since 1824. It is integrated by 32 federal entities (Secretary of Foreign Relations, 2016), with a width of 5,120.679 kilometres. It is the sixth biggest country in the American Continent, right after Greenland and ranks fourteenth in extension worldwide. (INEGI, n.d.).

Mexico is a young country: Over 50% of its 120 million inhabitants (up to 2015) are less than 26 years old. The official language is Spanish and there are 68 recognized linguistic groups with 364 variants. Mexico’s wealth is as much in its biodiversity as in its gastronomy, architecture
and culture (Secretary of Foreign Relations, 2016). Its capital is Mexico City, and it has the largest number of museums in the world. Besides the UNESCO has recognized 32 sites as world heritage.

Regarding the digital access in the country, 6 out of 10 Mexicans use the internet, and even though its coverage has increased exponentially in the past four years (4.4% between 2016 and 2017) according to the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI), in its subsection: Use and availability of Information and Communication Technologies (INEGI, 2017) refers that from the 73.1 million internet users, 53.9% complained about the slow data transfer, 39.3% experienced service interruptions, 24.8% affirmed there is an excessive non-desired information, 18.8% declared they are afraid of virus infection and 3.6% are also afraid of information frauds.

9.2 Regulatory Framework

According to normativity, in Mexico, the telecommunications are regulated by the Federal Institute of Telecommunications (Instituto Federal de Telecomunicaciones, IFT), an autonomous corporation that establishes guidelines that guarantee their rights over the TV and Radio concessionaires as well as the audience. The concessionaires have freedom of expression (without prior censorship), and are obligated to respect human and children rights as well as gender equality; they also have to facilitate the accessibility of contents to people with disabilities and provide discrimination-free content to the audience and other rights, according to the Political Constitution of the United States of Mexico (change to Mexico) itself (sixth amendment), the international deals and applicable laws. The Federal Institute of Telecommunications (IFT), in the document called “General Guidelines on the Audience’s Rights”, Chapter 1 “General Disposition”, defines Media Literacy as:

> Actions with the purpose to promote the analysis, comprehension and evaluation capacities that allow audiences to exercise the inherent rights to such character for the efficient usage of the audio-visual contents provided through the Broadcasting Service, Television Service and/or Restricted Audio.

(IFT, n.d., p. 2)

In a concrete way, the IFT on its press release 140–2016, in accordance to the concept of Media Information Literacy (MIL), declares the establishment of:

> guidelines for the integral realization of media literacy campaigns by the Institute directions so that the audience knows the rights and clearly understood the reach and implications of them, as well as
so that they have enough tools and knowledge for the comprehension and analysis of information, messages, contents, and publicity. These campaigns can be made, among others, through spots, printed announces and the realization of forums.

(IFT, 2016a, p. 2)

In the extensive document of the guidelines, on the 5th Article, Chapter 2 of “General Guidelines on the Audience Rights”, is specified that Mexican Radio and Television must propitiate:

a. The integration of families.
b. The harmonic childhood development.
c. The improvement of educative systems.
d. The diffusion of artistic, historical and cultural values.
e. The sustainable development.
f. The diffusion of the ideas that affirm our national unity.
g. The gender equality between women and men.
h. The divulgation of scientific and technical knowledge.
i. The proper use of language (IFT, n.d., p. 8).

In the same way, the regulations indicate that the audiences must be able to clearly differentiate between programmes and publicity contents; this means, not to transmit publicity or propaganda as journalistic or newsworthy information (IFT n.d., section II of the rights, Article 5-XVI). This regulation is often ignored by the TV stations, especially on the magazine shows that are transmitted in the morning schedule and addressed mainly to housewives. It is frequent, for example, to see interviews with a specialist of some type of disease, where they suggest a certain medicine from a specific brand or medical attention in a particular medical centre.

It is here that the MIL must be reinforced. Although the document “General Guidelines on the Audience Rights” and other regulations are available to the public in a free and continuous manner through the Network, a significantly high percentage of the population does not know them. It is the universities’ television channels that work concretely with the MIL inside their programming, and that is why we dedicate a later analysis to these TV stations.

9.3 Institutions and Social Actors

In order to promote media education in Mexico, at the end of the administration of President Enrique Peña Nieto (2018), the federal government created the federal agency called: Coordinación General @prende.mx with the objective: “of carrying out the planning, coordination, execution and periodic evaluation of the Digital Inclusion Program (PID).
Which seeks to promote literacy, incorporation of new information and communication technologies in the teaching-learning process” (La Coordinación General, @prende.mx, n/d).

The analysis of the actors that participate in MIL is developed from three instances: The Secretariat of Public Education (SEP), non-governmental organizations (NGO) and the university television networks for the following reasons:

- The education in Mexico is administrated by the SEP and its norms apply in all the countries. The SEP has included the media education in its guidelines, and this government dependency was the one that promoted and supported the entrance of internet in the country, then known as the National Science Foundation (NSFNET).
- There are NGO focussed exclusively on the analysis of different issues of the educomunication, which at the same time are diffusers of the scientific knowledge in this subject; they also promote students, teachers and experts from the humanities and social sciences areas.
- Television is an important mass media, broadcasting informative and entertainment content, but also in the formation of its audiences, which is a goal that is aimed by the university and government television networks.

9.3.1 SEP and MIL

Since we start with the word “education” as the first element of analysis, the authors agreed in selecting the SEP as principal actor of MIL. Its goal is to establish the guidelines and norms for the public and private education in the country, at all levels. This organism, which was created on 21 October 1921 (Portal del Gobierno de México, 2018), has the responsibility of creating the conditions that ensure Mexicans access to an education of quality and has reached in both formal and continuing education. It covers the different stages of the life of the Mexicans, the required human educational and regional conditions, and the required modalities (different grades, ages and educational conditions that the SEP covers are shown in Table 9.1).

The National Science Foundation (NSFNET) supported by the SEP and the National Science and Technology Council (CONACYT in Spanish) made the first Internet connections in Mexico through several universities such as the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), the Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Occidente (ITESO), the Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey (ITESM), the Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas (UAZ) and the Universidad Técnica Latinoamericana de Puebla (Rodríguez, 2015).
Table 9.1 Educational levels in Mexico, under the SEP normativity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic education</th>
<th>Medium education</th>
<th>Higher education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(12 years of formation)</td>
<td>(2 or 3 years of formation)</td>
<td>(variable formation time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child development</td>
<td>High school: General and technological (2 or 3 years</td>
<td>– Federal public universities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre (CENDI, in Spanish) from birth to 2.9 years old) providing optional maternal care for working mothers.</td>
<td>3 years of formation depending on the geographic zone</td>
<td>– State public universities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten (3 years of formation, starting from 3 years old)</td>
<td>Modalities: Face to face, online or combined high school, also for persons with special needs, one-test and training for work.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary (6 formation years, children from 6 years old, teenagers in risk, and adults that lack this formation)</td>
<td></td>
<td>– Technological institutes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle school</td>
<td></td>
<td>– Technological universities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3 formation years, from 12 years old)</td>
<td></td>
<td>– Polytechnic universities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>– National pedagogic university.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>– Open and distance university of Mexico.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>– Intercultural universities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>– Investigation public centres.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>– Public normal schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>– Other public institutions (Military education, health, fine arts, anthropology, andragogy, merchant navy, among others)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Based on information from SEP.

The date of the beginning of the internet varies from 1986 to 1989, depending on the sources (Islas, 2011; Rodríguez, 2015), both references agree that El Tecnológico de Monterrey, (ITESM) was the first university to make a terrestrial connection with Austin University in the United States of America. This institution made its first connection tests on the web from 1983 to 1984; however, we did not find any reference on documents.¹
In Mexico, the universities were the main internet access providers, until the mid-1990s. In 1995, the number of .com domains for the first time exceeded the total number of .mx domains destined for educational purposes. This fact defined the transition to a stage in the internet development, in which the universities’ role would be much more modest (Islas, 2011, p. 2).

Regarding the relationship between MIL and the higher educational institutions, the Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León (UANL), a public university located in the northeast of Mexico, has made changes in its educational programmes in order to include subjects that, in which in a transversal way, support the goals of MIL. As a background, in 1999 a new project emerged in the UANL, that integrated to different degrees learning units, general skills indicated in the tuning project (among them, informational and media skills) (Bravo Salinas, 2007).

This concept of skills matches the definition of MIL, so theoretically, these learning units should provide, in a direct or indirect way to the students important elements on media literacy. Even though there is a subject directly related to the digital communication (called “information technology”), it is limited to the development of technical skills for the use of software with academic purposes; therefore, the transversality with the rest of the learning provides significant value to the media literacy.

9.3.2 NGO and MIL

In this part, the participation of associations and research networks stand out in the investigation of the communication sciences, which through congresses, seminars and publications present experts and audience interested in the results of scientific analysis of communication issues. Analysis of issues linked to the traditional and digital media can be observed, which also help as fundaments for discussing public policies of MIL.

Some organisms and institutional associations that participate in the analysis of the problematics of MIL are the following: The National Council for Teaching and Investigation of the Communication Sciences (CONEICC, in Spanish), The Mexican Association of Communication Researchers (AMIC, in Spanish) and other organisms that are described below.

- CONEICC is a non-profit organism that was born under the auspice of 14 national universities and was constituted in 1976. Its objective is to foment the investigation, the teaching and the extension of the communication sciences towards the solution of the social, technical and educational problems that the national reality has, through the rational and integral use of the human, methodological and material
resources available in this matter. Some of the actions related to MIL are creating workshops for young investigators, boosting the development of media observatories and investigation centres, academic groups, investigation academies and consolidating the communication teaching in Mexico (CONEIC, 2016).

- **AMIC** is a civil organization integrated by communication academics from several universities, mainly from the UNAM and the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana. It discusses communicational issues and analyses the theoretical approaches of this field in seminars and conferences. In 13 of its 19 investigation groups, MIL subjects are analysed: New technologies, internet and information society; reception studies; communication and education; speech, semiotic and language; intercultural communication; communication and genre; civil society; participation and alternative communication; communication policies; youth studies and communication; sports, culture and society; public media and science communication.

- **A favor de lo mejor**: It originally emerged as a social movement composed of academics, social groups, parents, investigators and advertisers that were collecting requests for better-quality television content. Its goal is to increase the quality of media content and with this, create a relationship between them and society. This non-profit organization works in collaboration with the instances involved in the communication process: Media, advertisers, audience and authorities, with the purpose of making possible that the reach and penetration of the mass media have a positive impact in society. It promotes “that the media, in its purpose of entertaining and informing the audience, also contributes to its education, culture and human development; that through their content they promote “what is constructive, worthy, the best of our traditions customs” (A favor de lo mejor, 2018, par. 3). This organization seeks to contribute to the creation of a new communication culture that elevates the fundamental values and contributes to a dignified and civilized coexistence.

### 9.4 Teacher Training

The professionals instructed on MIL contents are those who have a bachelor’s degree in Communication, Information or other alike. Although not all of them are dedicated to teaching, from their diverse professional areas they inflict on the society formation regarding MIL. Teacher’s formation on primary education is on charge of Teaching Schools (*Escuelas Normales*) and recently has been permitted the incorporation of other professionals as teachers at this level.

The General Direction of Higher Education for Professionals (DGESPE, in Spanish) is the one that proposes and coordinates educational policies
on Higher Education for the teachers training institutions in order to achieve an optimal level of quality and coverage, as well as their integration to the needs of primary education of the country. This institution indicates that there are 261 teaching schools in Mexico with syllabi from 1999 and 2018, and this last one was modified in August 2018, so there are still no graduates (DGESPE, 2018).

On an interview with the teacher Gabriela Guerrero Hernández from the School of Philosophy and Literacy of the UANL, it was noticed that the syllabus was the same for every Teaching school, where only the educational level was changed, (this is, primary, secondary and preschool). In these degrees, there are not learning units specialized in technology or media because the technology is transversal. It is not focussed on critical training about media usage that promotes a reflexive society, and this demonstrates the existence of a breach on the syllabi.

On the other hand, with the proposal of the 2018 syllabi, three technologies are being used on the preparation of future teachers: (Information and Communication Technologies, Learning and Knowledge Technologies and Empowerment and Participation Technologies, taking advantage of the technology potentialities, both on their formation and in their professional exercise, according to their educational model, teaching schools, reinforcement strategy and transformation.

The formation is provided intensively. As the semesters pass by, the teachers are trained in the new educational model (including technological aspects); nonetheless, the efforts vary according to every school’s resources. There are a lot of teaching schools on the south of the country that do not have enough resources; therefore, they do not have the required infrastructure for the promotion of these conditions, compared to schools in Monterrey, Guadalajara and Mexico Cities, where the teaching schools have more resources and more training opportunities for the teachers.

The resistance to change is very common among teachers who are migrating to digital innovation in contrast to the new entry aspirants, as in the situation of the teaching school “Miguel F. Martínez Centenaria y Benemérita”, from Monterrey, Nuevo León, that must buy a laptop to enter as students.

On its part, some national organisms also make an effort in the formation of professionals in contents of educations towards media, such as:

- The Common space for higher and long-distance education (ECOESAD, in Spanish), whose mission is to promote, develop and offer relevant and quality distance education, based on collaboration and innovation, aimed at the population in general and especially at groups with difficult access to education.
• The National System of long-distance education (SINED, in Spanish) whose purpose is to coordinate the actions for the establishment and development of the system through educational social networks that use innovative technologies, methodologies, products and services to promote the quality, coverage and equity of the education in Mexico.

9.4.1 Training and Resources

With the intention of reducing the digital breach and promoting the use of communication technologies on the teaching-learning process, the Digital Literacy and Inclusion Program (PIAD, in Spanish) was created in 2012. This programme comes out as a campaign proposal by the president Enrique Peña Nieto with the intention of delivering tablets to students from 5th and 6th grade.

The programme was implemented in 2013 when the resource acquisition budget was approved and that year, 240,000 equipment were given to students and educational authorities, benefiting 220,430 5th and 6th graders at public schools on various states of the country. For the school year 2014–2015, 709,824 tablets were delivered to 20,554 classrooms at 16,740 schools of five states: Sonora, Colima, Tabasco, Mexico State, Puebla and the Federal District, too; they also gave the required resources for their implementation, including 16,740 servers, 16,740 switch, 16,740 power supports, 20,542 routers, 20,542 wireless projectors and 20,542 digital boards (México Digital, 2014).

This action was very criticized due to technical and transparency issues related to the financial resources assigned for its implementation and the lack of pedagogical support (Gándara, 2017; Hernández, 2016). The little information about the PIAD programme, both official and newsworthy, never mentions any teacher training-orientated actions for the media language comprehension and managing with educational purposes. Nonetheless, it is important to mention that teaching initiatives have been developed from the SEP’s TV station, such as the General Direction of Educational Television, with an offer on didactic materials development, pedagogical use of television, courses and workshops on audio-visual production and documentation, educational use for the television and computing, just to mention some of them, which represents some Media Literacy advances.

9.5 Academic Production

In this point it is important to emphasize that the products aimed at educating the public on Media Literacy, whose goal is to promote the development of reflexive persons, are not limited to pedagogical objects inside
formal education; therefore, authors include a sampler of audio-visual products generated by television channels that fulfil the MIL’s target at Mexico, besides the academic products that, as part of the National Program of Education, are generated by the SEP. Based on this, two sections are presented: In the first section, proper television practices are described, and in the second, the academic products.

9.5.1 Audio-Visual Content Production

About the television role in Mexico and Media Literacy, it is the universities’ channels, more than the private, that include explicit content on this subject. For this reason, and since the television channels concessioned to the universities have the obligation and moral responsibility to form reflective audiences through their contents, we are going to show an analysis of the education on Media Literacy activities from some public-access television channels in charge of the most important universities of the country: UNAM, TV-UNAM, Instituto Politécnico Nacional Channel 11 and Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León (UANL), channel 53; channel 22 on charge of the Secretary of Culture, located at the XEIMT-TD station, Mexico City and part of the Network of Educational and Cultural Radio Broadcasters and Televisions of Mexico and of the Network of Public Broadcasting System Stations of the Mexican State.

In our country, public-access television is still the preferred audio-visual media of the average Mexican. Forty-eight per cent only watches public-access television, 39% only watches paid service television, 10% watches both and 3% do not have a signal. The main reasons to prefer paid-service television are the variety of content and channels, the poor signal quality of the public-access television or that the service is included on the same package by their internet or telephone provider.

Those who do not have the service claim that the price is too high, they do not have time for watching TV or they consider that the channels included on the public-access television are enough (INEGI, 2017).

Below is shown the role that some of these channels have on Media Literacy and in general, on the cultural and educational formation of the children and teenagers audience:

- **Channel 22**, known as “Mexico’s cultural channel”, produces and spreads, through cutting-edge technology platforms, artistic and cultural-related content, both national and international, with the intention of promoting knowledge, diversity and values of democratic coexistence (Channel 22, 2018). It was the first Mexican public TV station to complete the digitization process and to broadcast
in high definition (HD), and in 2012 it concluded its digitization process.

As a good practice example on MIL of channel 22, we can point the show “Apantallados TV”, which is hosted by a group of children from different places around Mexico. Its main target is to inform the community in general, important data regarding social network usage, Internet browsing and cyberbullying. In the chapter called “Safe access to social networks: Facebook (FB)”, the writer fulfills the following requirements: They share objective and concrete knowledge with their audience (they define what is a social network), they use empathic communication (FB is a vital part of almost every teenager’s life) and they indicate restrictions on the use of the network (FB, according to their creators, is allowed to people over 13 years old). Likewise, they give advice on positive uses of the social network besides entertaining (search or create spaces with certain information of a specific subject, such as sports, culture or science, file trading and virtual groups, among others). They give awareness on the importance of safe browsing (it is suggested to establish permits and locks, deciding whom to accept as a contact and having close communication with their parents to keep them informed).

- **Channel 53**, on charge of the *Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León*, produces television and radio content focused on spreading cultural and scientific knowledge as well as the University’s values. Its programming is based on the coverage of institutional and cultural events of the University, as well as the knowledge generated by the speciality areas of the different educational programmes that it offers, that range from arts and humanities to science and technologies (Canal 53 UANL, 2018). Standing programmes are The Sustainable World, Healthcare, Legal Action and Women in Science.

- **Channel TV UNAM**: It is a public-access TV channel on charge of UNAM. Its target is to promote dialogue, reflection and diversity in a framework of critical communication and respect. Its production and programming committee is integrated by specialists from different areas such as Biological, Chemical and Health Sciences, Humanities, Art and Philosophy among others; as well as experts in middle and high education.

  Their good practice example on MIL is the show “¡Ton’s qué?” (TV UNAM, n.d.), which includes a panel discussion on charge of two young university students (they change) who invite from one to three experts. The hosts choose topics, questions and guests. The interesting part is the perspective they take to analyse the subjects and the way they relate them to movies and literature topics.
The emission of: “Trapped in the network” is highlighted. Here, through the reflexive question “why can’t we get out of the social networks?”, the guests talk about aspects like interpersonal communication and the search and transfer of information but also about the risk of turning this habit into an addiction. Of the same way, they point out the importance of considering aspects related to safety and protection of the user’s personal information. The two seasons’ topics (2018) go from presidential elections, teen pregnancy, activism and social network to what is read in Mexico, just to mention some examples.

- *El Canal Once* (1959) is sponsored by the Instituto Politécnico Nacional (IPN). This television channel is considered as the first educative and cultural public access television in the country, and a pioneer in Latin America. Along with its history, it has been recognized because of its content that provides knowledge, information, culture and entertainment. It has its audience defence and a citizen committee which is an advisory body in the directive areas of Canal once that guarantees the educative and cultural orientation of the content emitted, with an emphasis in its editorial independency, citizen participation and different ideology, ethnic and cultural expressions, with opinion and advisory faculty”. (Canal once, page. 1). It has a purpose to “generate, obtain and broadcast cultural, universal and innovative content, that reflect the social diversity and encourage the society construction” (Canal Once, 2018). Currently, Canal Once’s content even reaches the United States of America.

One singularity of Canal once, is that, through channel 11.2, it generates an exclusive bar for children audience in *Canal Once Niños*. As a good practice example, we can point out that in their website the following information stands out: The contact with the audience (children, teenagers, parents and public in general) is via telephone or by email, and they highlight that they do not have social networks and recommend that parents help their children to fill out their personal information if they want to register and write to the channel. The same website of *Once Niños* has sections like *Padres y maestros*, which talks between other things about children and social networks, how to detect if a child is suffering bullying, how mobile devices affect children’s life, children and television and children self-esteem. Information is presented in an attractive way, as a mental map, where the graphics, colours and shapes capture the children’s attention without subtracting importance on the information in the text, which is simple, clear and concrete.
In the case of the subject children and social networks, they start with the definition of basic concepts like what is a social network, they point out the risks for children such as: cyberbullying, behaviour imitation that put in risk their integrity, social isolation and grooming.

9.5.1.1 About Media Consumers

In relationship with the use and consumption of audio-visual content, according to the national survey of 2016, promoted by the IFT (2016), 96% of the persons that were interviewed had television, on average, 1.9 TV devices in their homes, 1.2 digital tv devices and 0.7 analogue tv devices (average). Also, 49% of the persons, had paid TV. Seventy-four per cent of the persons reportedly consume open-access programming, and the most viewed content are the news, movies and soap operas.

The most viewed channels are: Televisa, Azteca Trece, Canal Cinco, Azteca Siete and Canal Once, followed by Gala TV, Canal 22, Multimedios, Imagen Televisión and Proyecto 40. Also, 51% have internet connection in their homes, or in an accessible place, but only 26% affirmed they consume its content, being their favourite: Music videos (45%), movies (39%) and series (35%).

The mobile phone stood out as the most used device between the surveyed population to access to content on the internet (70%), followed by the computer (36%), tablets (18%) or smart TVs (16%). This was mainly through platforms like YouTube, Netflix, Facebook Live, Clarovideo and Google. On the other hand, 65% of the people surveyed, affirmed to consume open access even though they have paid programming, and these are precisely the most viewed channels in this sector, particularly Televisa, Azteca Trece, Canal Cinco, Azteca Siete and FOX, this last one being the only paid channel in the top five.

9.6 General Appraisal

The actions to promote an effective media literacy in Mexico are strengthened with the intervention of cultural television, NGO and the SEP; nonetheless, as in the rest of the world, the establishment of public policies in this sense is running behind the communication and digital technology advances. Providing tablets or 3D printers to educative institutions is not enough if with them you don’t include an education to use them with ethics and critical sense. A plastic weapon is as mortal as a traditional one, and even more dangerous when it can be crafted, not bought by the users with no restrictions.
A digital tablet can be a mortal weapon when used to bully classmates. The good news is that there are plenty of efforts by the actors previously mentioned and analysed that aim to media literacy. Now, it’s time for researchers, teachers, parents and citizens to put our children’s view on this content. Finally, it’s important to highlight that the results presented in this work, and the critical posture of it do not constitute a strict analysis, but the posture of the academics in an educocommunication context (especially in the authors converge). In this context, other variables apart from the educocommunicational are not included, neither does it pretend its generalization; nonetheless, the work presented works as a base for experts and the general public, to notice the importance of media literacy in Mexico, as something that will boost the development of our nation.

Notes

1 Note from the author: As a former student of the institution, I can verify that, in our library, with the help of a technician, we consulted information from published articles in the *Journals of Mass Communication* of the University of Austin, Texas (Flores Michel, 2018).

2 We greatly appreciate the support of Rita Gabriela Fraire Santiesteban for her valuable document compilation on the topics of teacher training and academic production.

References


fortalecimiento/070618-ESTRATEGIA_DE_FORTALECIMIENTO_y_TRANSFORMACION_DE_ESCUELAS_NORMALES.pdf
10 Media education in Peru. A field full of opportunities

Ana-María Cano-Correa and Rosario Nájar-Ortega

10.1 Socio-Political Context

In Peru, as in many other places, expectations from television regarding its educational potential increased. The possibility of reaching remote places and its ability to broadcast content without apparent mediation offered unprecedented opportunities to disseminate messages for training purposes or for integration among citizens. However, these expectations were tempered by the commercial nature that this new technological invention soon acquired. The State was then required to create entities and policies aimed at protecting time lots focussing on education. Specifically, in the field of educommunication, in 1964, the National Institute of Tele-Education (INTE) was created as part of the Ministry of Education. This institute was responsible for producing print and audio-visual material to support school education in the 1970s and 1980s through radio and television production for all levels of school education (Trinidad, 2005) during the military rule. Then, it was decommissioned for political reasons when the Fernando Belaunde administration (1980–1985) came into power, which marked a break from the economic and educational policies of the previous regime.

Tele-education is defined in General Education Law 19326 of 1972 as ‘a special collective education technique that systematically uses television, radio and film, audio-visual content, press, mail and other similar means in order to achieve maximum educational coverage of the national territory’ (Law Decree 19326, 1972). The main concern at that time was to expand the coverage of educational services to marginal and rural areas in the country that did not have access to educational infrastructure and services.

With General Education Law 23384 of 1982, distance education was established, and in 1998, this type of supplementary education, which had interactive educational material such as educational videos, workbooks, learning books, tutorial guides on CD and computer and telematic resources, came into being with the objective of expanding coverage of educational services, improving the quality of education and achieving equality at the primary level (Trinidad, 2005, p. 31). However, this
education system was established in precariously, without prior assessment of the conditions and opportunities for its implementation. Teacher training and timely distribution of materials were not given attention; thus, limited benefits were reported. This brought as a consequence that the mention State policy was not applied properly in the improvement of the apprenticeships (Trinidad, 2004).

In 2003, during President Alejandro Toledo’s administration (2001–2006), the Information Society in Peru Development Plan was drafted, establishing ‘promoting an intensive plan to integrate ICT in education’ (Multisector Commission for the Development of an Information Society [Codesi], 2005) as one of its strategies. One of its actions was establishing a general-access virtual school library for the ‘promotion of critical reading of texts and images with the use of ICT to integrate it with the diversified national curriculum, in order to develop skills and achieve expected learning conditions’ and the ‘creation and maintenance of online educational communities’ (Codesi, 2005, p. 59).

For this, distance education is part of the Huascarán Project, a Ministry of Education policy that had the following among its main functions:

- to develop and provide the educational community with an Information System with specialized resources in Information and Communication Technologies to improve the quality of both the learning and teaching process...
- ‘to expand coverage of educational services mainly in poorer and more remote areas with distance education programmes and to promote the development of educational networks that make use of information and communication technologies.

(Ministry of Education, n.d.)

This initiative included teacher training and incited high expectations, such as the modernisation and improvement of educational quality. However, over time, it became focussed on supplying computers for populist purposes (Cano, 2012).

From 2006 to 2011, the Alan García administration gave priority to the One Laptop per Child Programme. Regarding this programme and its creators, it is stated that Negroponte, Papert and others sought to develop and distribute a low-cost ‘children’s machine’ that would empower youth to learn without, or in spite of, their schools and teachers (Warschauer & Ames, 2010, p. 34). The Ministry of Education stated the following as the implementation objectives: ‘To develop in primary education level students the capacities considered in curricular design through the pedagogical application of XO laptops’ (Minedu, 2008).

The programme began in 2008, with rural schools in the poorest areas, as an initiative to reduce the existing education gap compared to urban areas and thus improve the quality of teaching and include those children in the benefits of global knowledge. However, its implementation...
suffered from serious difficulties, such as the lack of adequate infrastructure, lack of electricity and Internet access in schools, parents’ objections against their children owning laptops and poor teacher training on their use. Until 2011, almost one million computers from the One Laptop per Children (OLPC) programme were distributed; however, it underwent several modifications that distorted its original purpose. Among them, the most important was that it did not continue to supply a laptop to each child, but assigned them to Technology Resource Centres, classrooms that were equipped with multimedia and robotics equipment, for collective use and under the supervision of a specialised teacher.

In 2015, during President Ollanta Humala’s administration (2011–2016), the ‘Improving learning opportunities with information and communication technologies in rural areas’ project was launched. Once again, the goal was to improve the quality of rural education.

Over the past 30 years, successive administrations have made efforts to connect schools to audio-visual media, particularly by introducing digital technologies in the education system as an appropriate resource to offset the shortage of educational materials (games, for example) and the shortcomings of human resources (obsolete teaching methods) and infrastructure (libraries, for example). Even Martín Vizcarra’s current administration (2017–2021) has promised the widest Internet access in the whole country, considering that the current connectivity level is poor: 58.2% of Peru’s urban population over six years old uses the Internet, but in rural areas, this percentage drops to 15.4%. (National Institute of Statistics and Information Technology, 2018).

10.2 Regulatory Framework

There are many regulations that define the service that the digital media should provide to education: the Political Constitution of Peru states that ‘...social media should collaborate with the State in Education and in moral and cultural training’ (Political Constitution of Peru, 1993, p. 6). The Radio and Television Law states that

> The purpose of broadcasting services is to meet the needs of people in the field of information, knowledge, culture, education and entertainment, within a framework of respect for fundamental rights and responsibilities, as well as the promotion of human values and national identity.

(Law No. 28278, 2004)

The National Education Project through 2021, in its hope of setting up an Education Society, demands the media assume an educative role. On the other hand, the Education Law requires that teachers make use of ICT resources and tools in pedagogical processes. Also, the National
Curriculum for Primary Education in force (2017) contains provisions aimed at developing children’s media competences. There is no explicit mention of educommunication; thus, it is not understood as the acquisition of skills or learning from each media type—it anticipates teaching skills related to digital technology, using the definition it offers regarding the student profile:

distinguishes and organises information interactively; expresses through modification and creation of digital materials; selects and installs applications according to his/her needs to meet new demands and changes in context. Identifies and chooses interfaces according to his/her personal situation or socio-cultural and environmental surroundings. Participates and relates to responsibility in social networks and virtual communities, through dialogues based on respect and collaborative project development (…) The student takes advantage of information and communication technologies (ICT) to interact with the information, manage his/her communication and learning.

(Minedu, 2016, p. 17)

In 2016, the government issued the National Digital Literacy Plan, noting that

the proposed paradigm is socio-constructivist, in which the concept of use is replaced with the concept of mediation, and in which the functional position (optimal management of tools) is replaced with a socio-cultural position (social practices and interactive experiences in virtual environments).

(Minedu, Ministry of Transportation and Communication, National Office of E-Government & Information Technology, 2016, pp. 23–24)

We noted that the Peruvian educational system prioritises digital technology as a training resource for children and adolescents at the expense of traditional media.

10.3 Institutions and Social Actors

In Peru, 27 institutions that promote media education for the benefit of students and teachers were identified. They demonstrate distinct characteristics according to the source of their resources, the technology they use, and the level of participation offered to the recipients. Thus, from the State, the ‘School Goes to the Theatre’ programme established by the Ministry of Culture provides content for the development of class sessions. It has a Video Library of Cultures and Culture Points and
audio-visual and instructional productions for classroom use. The Fe y Alegría Radio Institute develops a distance learning radio programme called Aprendiendo en Casa [Learning at Home] under the Alternative Primary Education type, which provides free opportunity for people over 15 years of age in vulnerable or marginal situations to complete primary studies and enter the labour market. The IPE Channel of Peru’s National Institute of Radio and Television (IRTP) is the only Peruvian channel that offers programming dedicated exclusively to children and produces the programme La Buena Educación [Good Education], aimed at parents, via open signal and digital platforms using themes on values, culture, citizenship and traditions. Along the same lines, the Radio and Television Advisory Council (Concortv) organises workshops on freedom of expression, citizen rights and critical reception. The Ministry of Education (Minedu) openly supports digital technology. It offers around 6,000 resources within the framework of the digital literacy process instituted as public policy. Its flagship projects are the Perú Educa [Peru Educates] website, the Todos a Leer [Everyone Reads] project and the Pedagogical Support Strategy project. The latter consists of supplying 25,000 tablets and 42,000 robotics kits for promoting science, mathematics and communication. In the last two decades, the State has been investing in the production and dissemination of materials and in teacher training for their application in the classroom. However, they do not participate in content creation or in choosing the platforms they will use.

Private companies have also been developing educommunication programmes focussed on the use of digital technologies. The greatest impact and sustainability based on national coverage, resources and transfer processes to local and regional governments have been achieved by Fundación Telefónica and the private organisation Empresarios por la Educación. Both institutions offer training, advice and classroom monitoring related to digital technologies in rural and urban-marginal sectors. Empresarios por la Educación has 90% of teachers who incorporate ICT in the classroom and 65% who use the ‘Google for Education’ platform in their learning sessions (L. Campos, personal communication, May 10, 2018). Fundación Telefónica promotes the Comprehensive Digital Education project, whose areas of work are digital literacy and innovation, and the Digital Classroom project, which is a portable station with tablets and Internet access (J. Gutiérrez, personal communication, May 15 2018). It also offers an interactive website, Educared, with information on best practices, contests and online training courses for teachers (http://educared.fundaciontelefonica.com.pe/). It continuously provides training to teachers. As for teachers’ educative communicative competences, there are private companies that recognise the effort, best practices and innovation of public-school teachers at the national level. Every year, Samsung Electronics Peru S.A.C. announces the Solutions for the Future contest and awards projects related
to science, math and technology that solve local problems and promote the link between schools and communities. It also created the Smart School project to provide schools with smart classrooms so that classes become interactive. Interbank promotes The Teacher who Makes an Impression, a contest that highlights teachers’ initiative and commitment in their pedagogical task, to support the educational community. The teachers’ union, through the Teacher Apportionment, awards the Horacio Zeballos Gámez Prize, whose objective is to promote the creativity of primary and non-university higher education teachers, and recognises innovative projects that use ICT.

International organisations such as UNESCO and UNICEF have also made educative efforts in Peru, with an approach focussed on citizen education, offering recipients the opportunity to express themselves through media. With an interschool contest, La Onda de mi Cole, UNICEF encourages children and adolescents to exercise their rights to participate and express their opinions in a playful way. They produce audio-visual content that is published on social networks. The project has enabled the mobilisation of around 100,000 students and involves 120 public and private educational institutions (G. López, personal communication, May 28, 2018).

The largest number of institutions dedicated to media education is found in private civil associations, which develop various projects using audio-visual communication. An interesting initiative at the Latin American regional level is the Escuela Plus project, an audio-visual education programme promoted by DirecTV, Discovery in Schools, the World Bank and Microsoft. The goal is to provide innovative audio-visual resources to improve the quality of learning by making various channels with educational content available. It includes files and pedagogical manuals for teachers. In Peru, coverage includes urban and rural schools.

NGOs and non-profit civil associations foster educative communication from a more participatory and holistic perspective. Students develop content and participate in creating products that are disseminated among the population. The most emblematic, owing to its sustainability, is the Pukllasunchis Association in Cusco, focussed on inclusive and environmental intercultural educative communication. It develops the Radio for Andean girls and boys programme, produced by the students themselves, in Quechua and Spanish. Its premise involves how children should strengthen their skills in expression, leadership, teamwork, use of radio language, self-esteem and oral communication. The Chasqui Audio-Visual Communication group has had a notable impact in the urban school environment through the network of micro-cinemas in broadcasting films focussed on values, social reflection and entertainment (J. Portocarrero, personal communication, May 15, 2018). In 2017, 178 Peruvian and Latin American films were screened in public and private schools (M. Benites, personal communication, May 29, 2018).
The Peruvian Association of Culture TV Social Communicators has built a network of youth correspondents and the Not Suitable for Adults (NAPA) project, created by students, with images of regions in the country that strengthen their self-esteem. The right to express themselves is disseminated through digital platforms, and teachers use them in the classroom (C. Cárdenas, personal communication, May 18, 2018). Combi-Rolling Art is a platform for school film clubs and audio-visual resources for classrooms. Students in the country produce movies and short films about human rights and the environment. They develop skills such as responsibility, organisation, teamwork and critical thinking about their reality through the use of audio-visual language. One of the few institutions that work at a national level in coordination with the Ministry of Education in Lima is Acción por los Niños. It promotes radio and journalism production as a means of education on rights against violence and discrimination against schoolchildren. Schoolchildren organise, participate and give their opinion about their personal and communal security (L. Febres, personal communication, June 1, 2018).

Some institutions integrate educommunication with academic proposals aim at influencing public policies. Such is the case of the Catholic Church, which, through the Latin American and Caribbean Catholic Communication Association (Signis Peru), provides training for teachers and students, and with research results and concrete experiences, it promotes the theoretical reflection of educommunicative discourse. Calandria, promoted and directed for many years by Rosa María Alfaro, is perhaps the organisation with the most experience and prestige. It has brought together all the perspectives of educommunication, from research, production of materials and training to influencing public policy. It has produced polls, materials, videos, books, talks and training workshops throughout the country, prioritising some thematic lines such as the environment, citizenship, gender, HIV-AIDS and youth culture. It also promoted the enactment of the Media Law by the Congress of the Republic in 2004. It created the Social Communication Citizen Monitoring, a ‘civic movement that, through dialogue and active participation, seeks to promote a more vigilant and reflective attitude in the population regarding the media; and in the media, it promotes greater social responsibility’ (Calandria, n.d.).

The Institute of Peruvian Studies (IEP) has recently undertaken the OlaTICs project to study the use of digital technologies in countries within Latin America. One current issue of concern is the risk that children face due to the indiscriminate use of digital media, which is handled by the Crecer en Red Association and RedNATIC (Network of Latin American Organisations for the rights of children and adolescents on the safe and responsible use of ICT) via its ‘Todo a 1 Clic’ project.

An interesting finding in the research was learning that radio continues to be used to promote citizen rights, as it is widely accessible and
requires little investment. At a regional level and from private media, there are some widely popular broadcasters that broadcast programmes with an educational focus. La Voz de la Selva, in Loreto, held the ‘What Bothers Me About School’ campaign to promote critical thinking on citizen rights in support of schoolchildren. It also broadcasts the *Huambrillo Habla* programme, produced by adolescents from Iquitos, in which they discuss topics of interest and promote participation from peers. Through empowerment, they have been able to sensitise the region on protecting school rights (O. Reátegui, personal communication, November 28, 2017). Radio Cutivalú, in Piura, exercises citizen vigilance to defend human rights and reduce the gender gap. It supports public schools in building citizenship using the radio. Finally, La Restinga, in Loreto, produces various video, art and game projects aimed at students wherein they can present their experiences.

Various stations in large cities also offer programmes with educational content produced by teenagers and for teenagers. Such is the case of the Comas and Stéreo Villa stations, which broadcast *School Voices* and *Sin Rollos ni Paltas*, respectively. These are large-audience youth programmes produced by schoolchildren that promote their rights as citizens.

### 10.4 Teacher Training

In Peru, there are 51 universities that train educators and 45 universities that offer a degree in communication. In 35 of those universities, subjects related to technology are taught. It is clear that the competences in this field are indispensable in order to carry out this teaching activity. In most universities, this type of subject is taught in all levels: initial, primary and secondary.

Education in digital technology is present in undergraduate and master’s degrees from two perspectives: technology as a complement to teaching practice and developing a critical attitude towards it. The latter is present primarily in postgraduate studies.

It is not possible to offer a homogeneous overview of teacher training in terms of educommunicative competences as there are many differences between public universities, private universities and those in the capital when compared to provincial ones. Issues such as connectivity problems, lack of financial resources, insufficient infrastructure and administrative deficiencies affect the quality of teacher training.

In institutions with higher academic levels, located primarily in the capital, teaching is provided with, about and through technology, favouring comprehensive competences for the selection of resources and development of didactic strategies in accordance with current educational models. Training in educommunicative skills is carried out at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels and in all areas of specialisation.
(initial, primary and secondary). In a period of ten years, Professor Fernando Ruiz developed a workshop for secondary school instructors and students at the University of Lima and is currently working at the Antonio Ruiz de Montoya University.

In postgraduate programmes, specialised use of technology (robotics, web design and e-learning, for example) and ethics training is emphasised. It is considered that the use of digital technology is established in society and that it is necessary for teachers to be aware of the risks it involves for children and adolescents. Values and responsibility are addressed in a social environment intersected by digital technology. On the contrary, in for-profit universities with budgetary or administrative difficulties, generally located in poor regions of the country, training is limited to instrumental aspects. These regional universities also teach courses on audio-visual or print media, likely because they are considered gravitational and digital technology is not yet positioned in the local environment.

It should be noted that the Ministry of Education establishes that all public educational institutions must have basic technological equipment that empowers teachers to use digital tools (Minedu, 2016).

10.5 Academic Production

In order to understand recent production referring to educommunication, we consulted university archives, including journals, theses and research studies, and websites of companies, governmental entities and civil associations dedicated to education. We see a growing interest in understanding digital technology in all its scale and its impact on social and educational processes. In Peruvian universities, the technology applied to education has deserved primary attention in the last 15 years. Research on technological innovation in the classroom, teachers’ views and its potential to achieve learning is being carried out. On a smaller scale, there is interest in the medium of television and, to a lesser extent, in print or radio.

NGOs or non-profit civil associations offer abundant material that is freely available on the Web, covering topics related to citizenship rights, discrimination, health and youth problems. When it comes to audio-visual products, they are usually made by the adolescents themselves. Likewise, guides and manuals on how to use media in school teaching processes, such as videos and comic strips, are offered by public entities. In particular, the Ministry of Education and companies such as Fundación Telefónica also regularly publish digital material directed towards teachers.

Academic events organised by Concortv, Red ANDI Latin America, UNESCO, Cerebrum, IEP and various universities are often held on the implications of technology on learning, teaching methods, socialisation
of individuals and development of citizenship, matters that are currently highly relevant. It is important to highlight the contribution of research centres such as the Institute of Peruvian Studies and the Grade-Analysis Group for Development, which are analysing education in open dialogue with State agencies.

10.6 General Appraisal

Various private institutions, including companies, have shown interest in contributing along with the State to improve the quality of education, particularly in the country’s public schools. But there are still few initiatives that use the media education approach for these purposes. Some of them are focussed on audio-visual education. Puckllasunchis, Acción por los Niños, La Voz de la Selva, Cutivalú and the Comas and Stéreo Villa stations, through their experiences with radio, have managed to strengthen citizen education and respect for schoolchildren’s rights. Combi-Arte Rodante, TV Cultura, La Restinga and Chasqui Audio-Visual Communication Group offer spaces using film to construct stories where students complete productions on topics of interest. None of these projects has received support from the State.

Civil associations faced bureaucratic barriers when they have tried to approach the different levels of the Ministry of Education owing to political instability, constant ministerial changes and the continuous mobilisation of personnel that makes it impossible to carry out sustained agreements. The majority of project implementers agree that the State does not understand media’s ability as a fundamental tool to educate. According to the experiences analysed, the State has shown little ability to manage and be open to accepting initiatives and turn them into public policy. This has caused interesting projects to develop without continuity and become isolated and disjointed experiences.

One of the Ministry of Education’s main activities is training, but they become weak because teachers cannot take advantage of them properly in the classroom owing to lack of monitoring, counselling, equipment maintenance, security and accompaniment. A UNESCO study estimates that only 10% of teachers in schools are trained to use technology properly in the classroom. (Education Report February 2018, Year 27, No. 2). While the National Survey of Teachers (ENDO, 2014) indicates that for the question, ‘what equipment and materials are used most frequently in the development of your classes?’ a mere 4.7% indicate a laptop or tablet, 9.4% say a multimedia projector, 5.6% state a computer with Internet and a miniscule 1.1% say a cell phone. This shows that most teachers do not use technology to develop collaborative learning activities.

Most institutions that deal with media education protect the rights of children and adolescents and promote citizenship education. Their field of work is urban, marginal urban and rural areas, wherein participants
are teachers and students. Of the 27 institutions analysed, 21 correspond to private organisations and 5 to public organisations, where the work of the Ministry of Education stands out. Most of them work with digital platforms. Except Acción por los Niños and the Chasqui Audiovisual Communication Group, both private, all other institutions develop projects with public schools. Although most of them intend to contribute to strengthening school education, Fundación Telefónica, Acción por los Niños, Empresarios por la Educación and UNESCO have an impact on integrating their interventions aligned with the primary school curriculum.

Intervention modalities are diverse: teacher training, competitions, distribution of materials, technological resources and audio-visual production. Depending on financial resources, they cover local, regional or national areas.

Project success depends on how involved and committed the regional authorities, the school and the community are. Projects work best when recipients are empowered and develop their own initiatives. Such is the case of Fundación Telefónica, Empresarios por la Educación, UNESCO, UNICEF and Acción por los Niños, which are able to establish agreements and transfer processes with regional governments. Acción por los Niños is the only association that integrates its initiatives with the Information and Communication Technologies Council of the school municipality. This allows for the sustainability and institutionalisation of the projects (L. Febres, personal communication, June 1, 2018).

One of the courses of action that stands out is teacher training in digital technology, so that they replicate the experiences of their students and motivate their peers. At a national level, the Ministry of Education itself, Fundación Telefónica, Canal IPE, Acción por los Niños, Empresarios por la Educación, Samsung, Interbank and Teacher Apportionment develop projects and competitions through digital classrooms, innovation teams and sophisticated software. In the international arena, organisations that have greater support from foreign cooperation, such as RedNATIC, Signis, UNICEF and UNESCO, use interactive virtual platforms of greater scope, overcoming the instrumentalist approach. Regional associations at the local and national levels work using conventional means of communication. In some cases, they have transferred their work from traditional media to digital media.

Media education becomes an instrument for students to understand their citizenship rights. The projects offer spaces for them to express themselves, interact, express opinions and participate. From the balance created, we can see that there are a larger number of non-profit civil associations that carry out or have carried out educommunicative projects; however, they have limited scope and continuity. The main reason is that they have not formed alliances with strategic partners, where the State should be the main entity. Those with more resources and external financing have greater possibilities of replicating their interventions,
such as UNICEF, UNESCO or Signis, whose financing comes from the Catholic Church, which guarantees continuity of educommunicative work. Fundación Telefónica receives financial contributions from its headquarters in Spain, and Empresarios por la Educación is sponsored by private companies from different regions in the country.

The greater investment capacity of some of these institutions has allowed them to develop educommunicative projects taking advantage of the already established resources, as is the case of XO computers, which have been strengthened and renewed so that they are not wasted. At a national level, Fundación Telefónica stands out with a larger number of projects at a regional level and Puckllasunchis, in Cusco, with an iconic radio project to exercise rights and citizenship in children and adolescents from rural and marginal urban areas. On the contrary, those that are subject to economic support, mostly non-governmental organisations, develop interesting projects that are not sustainable over time.

Radio is one of the most important means of communication in the regions due to its easy access and because, with scarce resources, school children manage to train and develop technical and expression skills through mass media.

Television and video are the least used media. The IRTP broadcasts the programme *La Buena Educación* using both an open signal channel and cable as well as through digital platforms to have broader reach. Unlike in previous years, when newspapers were used the most in schools to educate, currently, they are only maintained by Acción por los Niños.

Regarding achievements, all institutions carry out monitoring during project development, which allows them to measure results; however, except for the Puckllasunchis Association of Cusco, systematised assessments are not carried out to identify improvement in learning. They limit themselves to organising experiences and promoting their replication in different parts of the country or to evaluating if the processes and procedures are complied with, but there are no impact measurements. This year, Fundación Telefónica will hire international consultants to evaluate 2018’s digital projects (J. Portocarrero, personal communication, May 15, 2018). This task could be very well accomplished by teachers and Peruvian university students, should there be joint work agreements.

According to an expert, Hugo Díaz, we do not improve learning quality despite technology for two reasons: first, teachers are underutilising resources, using equipment in didactic processes that can be done conventionally, and second, the Educational Management Units (UGEL) maintains a bureaucratic rigidity that does not allow teachers to innovate. They do not have autonomy because they are required to follow the regulations of the processes to apply curriculum content (H. Díaz, personal communication, May 17, 2018).
In relation to academic production, the theme of educommunication has also focussed on the analysis of experiences in applying digital technology, programmes developed by Minedu, such as the OLPC programme, and reporting successful experiences by private organisations and institutions. The production of didactic or work materials is scarce and, in this aspect, the NGO Calandria stands out. Since its very beginning, it has considered the potential of newspapers, radio, television and digital technology as a challenge for the development of citizenship in Peru.

Challenges

1. Media education in school training is not a priority issue in the country. It is necessary to create a development plan that allows sustained policies that address the deficiencies of infrastructure, connectivity, public management and teacher training.

2. More efficient technological investment is needed to maintain stable projects that take into account the obsolescence of equipment maintenance. It is worth analysing investments with returns, especially for projects whose governing body is the Ministry of Education (H. Díaz, personal communication, May 17, 2018).

3. In 2011, through a ministerial resolution, the government of Peru made official the creation of school municipalities in public schools in the country. The goal was to open a space for opinion, school organisation and citizen monitoring to promote student participation. This space could be better used to incorporate media education, as Acción por los Niños is trying to promote (L. Febres, personal communication, June 1, 2018).

4. Best practices are not followed. One way to make them known is through contests, but there are not enough communication strategies to achieve wider announcements, and the limited dissemination of these events restricts their opportunity to be replicated. Contest winners, in many cases teachers from remote rural areas, are contributing to the improvement of the educational quality of students, creating innovative materials according to their needs. However, these successful experiences are scarcely disseminated.

5. For projects to work effectively, it is important to form partnerships that involve various social actors: the State, business, organisations, educational and academic institutions, the community and recipients. This would allow, for example, organisations and the community to turn to universities for rigorous assessments on the suitability of resources, processes and results obtained. On the other hand, the State should create a system of incentives to encourage private companies to contribute by investing in educommunicative projects.

6. Teachers in Peru lack adequate training in media education; therefore, it is necessary to stress teacher training. Some experts suggest
the creation of an association of educommunicators so that teacher training includes, transversally, media education content in the classroom (F. Ruiz, personal communication, May 8, 2018). This will allow them to develop best practices in educational use.

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11 Media education in Uruguay. Between a narrow digital gap and the persistence of an educational gap

Rosario Sánchez Vilela, María Lucía Gadea and María Laura Rocha

11.1 Sociopolitical Context

The rebuilding of the socio-political context in the last 30 years in Uruguay takes us back to the decade of the 80s, highlighted by the end of the dictatorship (1973–1984) and the recovery of the democracy. Two moments can be identified. The first one, from 1980 to 1984, which started with the plebiscite of 1980 and ended with national elections, even when there were banned political parties and politicians; the second one, from 1985 to 1990, when the first democratic government was established and ended with the second government, without any bans, and with the political alternation of parties ruling.

The democratic transition in Uruguay had as tension point and relevance the *Concertación Nacional Programática* (Conapro), an institutional framework composed of political parties, committees, unions, business and social organizations which sought to debate and agree on the different aspects of the State in the recovery of democracy. Education was the focus of attention in the debates about the changes the country should undertake after years of lack of liberties and guarantees. As a result of the debate at Conapro, some points arose which later would become the Emergency Law of Education in the first democratic government (first presidency of J.M. Sanguinetti). This law together with the restitution of the teachers that had been removed by the dictatorship, constituted the two key points in education when entering democratic life (Pasturino, 2012, p. 415).

The most urgent educational needs had to do with profound changes taking place in the way the family was composed, but above all with the incidence of poverty and the characteristics of its composition (Terra, 1989; Terra & Hopenhaim, 1986). In 1986 the percentage of people below the poverty line was 46.2%, but besides this, what was acknowledged was the phenomenon of child poverty (which still exists in the country). At that time, the percentage of poverty in the people between 18 and 65 years old meant a 40% and among the population that attended preschool or primary school meant a 63% (Pasturino, 2012, p. 410).
In this context, what is explained is the concern about educational policies aimed at equality. The need for an educational reform became a pressing matter and since the comeback of democracy, the expression “educational reform” has become a *leitmotif* which expressed – and continues expressing – the need to transform and strengthen education in all its levels, but especially high school education. Nevertheless, the successive reform impulses remained blocked. Media education was not at the heart of the concerns and it shyly emerges under the name of computer literacy at the beginning of the 1990. A detailed explanation of the reforms exceeds the limits and the aims of this chapter. However, we will point out the most important ones, whilst they are part of the context in which some computer literacy initiatives were developed.

Between 1995 and 1999, under the second presidency of Julio María Sanguinetti, an ambitious reform programme is started, which is known as “Rama Reform”. Sanguinetti appoints Germán Rama as the head of the organism in charge of public education, who had led the most important investigations which diagnosed the problems the Uruguayan education had from the Office of UNECLAC (United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean) in Montevideo and a team of experts in education. The key ideas of the educational reform were elaborated between 1989 and 1994 by this team of experts. De Armas and Garcé (2004) highlight that: “The most distinctive characteristic of this proposal is its clear vindication of the notion of State of Welfare and the role of the public area as a provider of educational services”. (p.71) It moved away, in a radical way, from other reformist projects supported by international agencies but despite being a sate and central reform, it ends up being referred to as a neo-liberal one (De Armas & Garcé, 2004, p. 70; Rilla, 2012, pp 116–117).

The main lines of action were: the expansion of preschool education with the objective of achieving its universality; the creation of full-time schools for the poorest sectors of the population; the extension of the school timetable and having the teachers in one education centre; expansion of teacher training by creating regional state centres; creation of the technological baccalaureate; and reduction of subjects and the organization of the curricula in areas. According to its own definitions, the general principles which inspired the reform were equality and educational quality in such a way that the student would acquire the necessary competence in order to exercise their citizenship in modern societies. Hence, the emphasis on learning English, IT and technologies. The definitions referred to computer literacy, despite the relative delay (though a decreasing one) in the country in terms of equipment, served as the framework for an effective rhetoric of modernity and progress which would appear in the following decades. The following government (2000–2004) continues with the suggestions pointed out by the reform, the development of English learning and also of an area called Distance Learning and Educational Computing
and an Audiovisual Centre, including the study of TV and Radio (Pasturino, 2012, p. 464). In 2005, the coalition of left-wing parties Frente Amplio came into power and a process for the elaboration of a new law of education is begun. This law was passed in 2008 and included the teachers’ unions in the government bodies of education. But the most important thing that happened during this government was the implementation of the Plan Ceibal (Plan of Educational Connectivity of Basic Computing for Online Learning), a reform action in education which was generated aside from the area of the education body and as an initiative directly dependent on the Presidency of the Republic. The way this reform was implemented represents in itself a very important issue, which is necessary to mention, although we cannot elaborate on it (Bentancur & Mancebo, 2012).

11.1.2 Education and ICT

The area of the media education linked with the access and competences in handling new information technologies, as well as the gradual introduction of the idea that they could result in better learning results went through different stages in the last three decades. The computer and IT appear for the first time in primary and secondary school in 1992, the year when the National System of IT and Education and the teaching training necessary to implement IT at all levels of public education began. The subject IT became part of the syllabus of the Basic Course of high school education, but the lack of equipment for all high schools made it difficult to develop the initial plan (Pasturino, 2012, p. 444). Afterwards, the Rama Reform would increase the timetable of IT and English, but in a programme which would include greater changes.

With Plan Ceibal, a policy of digital inclusion linked to the school is begun, and this continues until today. It is a programme called *One laptop per child* (OLPC), pioneer in Latin America for being the first in the world to have national coverage and to cover the whole of the public primary education system (Lugo, Ruiz, Brito, & Brawerman, 2016). After the visit of Nicholas Negroponte in Uruguay (2006), the presidential decree of Tabaré Vázquez in April 2007 inaugurates the Plan Ceibal. Its objectives were “to achieve the digital inclusion understood as a means to improve the quality of education, offer equal opportunities and promote digital literacy in the education community by providing Uruguayan students with technological equipment and connectivity” (Cobo, 2016, p. 49). In Annex 3 of this chapter we will cover this more in depth as it constitutes a significant part in the subject matter we are working on.

11.1.2 Some Data about Education in Uruguay

Some clarifying data about the current situation in the education in Uruguay may be useful to understand the place media education has, its
lines of development and also its flaws. Attendance to preschool and primary education is almost universal between 6- and 11-year-old students. The structural problems that the education in Uruguay currently has occur at high school education (De Armas & Retamoso, 2010; Filardo & Mancebo, 2013). They can be seen in the difficulty students have to finish the cycles and in the low acquisition of basic competencies: a little more than 70% of each generation finishes the three compulsory years of high school and only 40% manages to finish higher education. As well as this, “standard learning evaluations at high school level have shown that, since 2003 until today, a great number of the students who attend school until they are 15 years old, have not developed a set of competencies which are considered basic, in critical areas such as reading or mathematic and scientific reasoning...” (INEEd, 2016, p. 3).

What has to be added to this reality is the existing gap between educational performances, associated with the socioeconomic contexts of the homes and the school environment. This inequality becomes more relevant if we consider that “in 20% of the homes with low income live 48% of children between 3 and 5 years old and 46% of adolescents between 12 and 17 years old” (INEEd, 2017, p. 30). Although child poverty has decreased significantly in the last decade, it still remains as an important aspect in the country in such a way that “Uruguay registers a ratio between child poverty and adult poverty (especially, elderly adults) which locates it among those countries with greater levels of inequality between age groups with regards to access to welfare, to the detriment of younger generations” (De Armas, 2017, p. 15).

### 11.1.3 Expansion of Communication Technologies

Nevertheless, the expansion of communication technologies in Uruguay has been very intense and the digital gap is being reduced. The number of Internet users in Uruguay has constantly grown: it reached 88%, almost 2,900,000 users (in a population of a little more than three million people) and the percentage of homes with Wi-Fi reached 71%. The digital gaps between socio-economic status (SES) is reduced: the percentage of users of a high SES is 96%, of middle SES is 88% and of low SES is 81%. There has been an increase in all levels since 2016, especially in low and middle SES (Grupo Radar, 2018).

### 11.2 Regulatory Framework

The regulatory framework for media education in Uruguay is basically composed of two types of elements: the principles embodied by UNESCO and the definitions contained in the law.

The Law of Communication Services of Audiovisual Services, passed in December 2014, includes some general principles and specific articles.
Although it includes an extensive article (Art. 3) which includes definitions in a glossary, it does not include a definition of media education. It defines audiovisual services as being of public interest and as technical tools to exercise the right to freedom of expression and communication (articles 5 and 6). It also acknowledges the cultural laws “which include the effective fulfilment of individual and collective creative capabilities, the participation and enjoyment of culture in all its forms, in a frame of cultural diversity and democratization, especially by means of services of audiovisual communication” (Art. 25).

The articles which include specific prescriptions, in the section devoted to the rights of children and adolescents, indicate that the State will develop “education plans for the media” and “will promote the carrying out of research, courses, seminars and other similar activities to study the relationship between resources and childhood” (Art. 30). In the same line, the Committee of Audiovisual Communication is in charge of “promoting media literacy in the audiovisual area with the aim of encouraging the acquisition of the highest media competency by the people” (Art. 68).

The institutional design which the law imposes also attributes its competencies in the area of the National Human Rights and Ombudsman Office: it must “promote the education in the citizenship for the exercise of the communication of freedom of expression and the right to information, favouring the critical reception and the intelligent and creative use of the services of audiovisual communication” (Art. 85). Likewise, in coordination with other institutions, “it will promote a National Plan of Education for the Communication for media literacy and the development of communicational competencies, the promotion of the role of education in the media, the quality of professional training and the research in these areas.”(Art. 86) None of these dispositions has been realized to this date.

The Law of Communication Services of Audiovisual Services has not been totally in force because of the unconstitutionality of some of its articles and the delay in the legislation by the Executive Power. In October 2017 the Honorary Commission for Assessing Audiovisual Services (CHASCA in Spanish) was constituted according to the provisions of the law, but the representative parliamentary who must integrate it was not appointed. Likewise, since the Law was passed, the body which the CHASCA has to assess, the Committee of Audiovisual Communication, in charge of promoting media literacy, has not been constituted either.

### 11.2.1 Media Education in Primary and Secondary School

Media education has not been thought of as a specific area of knowledge. Based on the study of the syllabuses of Preschool, Primary and Secondary Education, we set ourselves to identify the lines of action which promote the development of those competencies involved in the different forms of
education, according to the main definitions of UNESCO (Frau-Meigs & Torrent, 2009; Grizzle & Torras Calvo, 2016; Wilson, Grizzle, Tuazon, Akyempong, & Cheung, 2011). In the official documents which were analysed, some principles and guidelines are formulated in accordance with Media and Informational Literacy (MIL). In this way, what arises is that in view of the great amount of information and technology available, libraries and laboratories are as important as the press, television and computers, which need to be integrated to the educational process. The need to generate learning based on abilities which foster investigation, search, selection, evaluation, organization, interpretation of information, teamwork, problem-solving and critical thinking is laid out (National Public Education Administration, 2006, p. 35).

In the syllabus of Preschool and Primary Education (from 3 to 12 years old) in areas such as Language, Art and Social Sciences, some recommendations are made to the teacher about practices and content which involve media education. For example, it is suggested to work with: media conversation (phone, answering machine, other digital means); informal letters and email; anecdotes and stories in episodes; characters, dialogue and plots in cartoons, animated cartoons and films; advertising language; newspapers; bibliographic search in libraries, bookshops and online; and the use of virtual tools (wiki, blogs) in order to publish and share information (National Public Education Administration, 2008, pp. 141–162).

In the area of Visual Arts (pp. 183–199) what is suggested is to work from the age of 3 with photographic and motion images: the creation of images by means of photography, collage, comic, photomontage using material and/or digital support is a line of action recommended to teachers as well as the introduction to cinema and film language and its genres. Similar orientations also appear in the list of content in the Social area (pp. 216–232) of the school syllabuses, focussing on the media as cultural expressions and their role in building stereotypes and creating opinions.

The syllabus revision at Secondary Education reveals some definitions which are quite close to media education when they refer to visual culture and the development of the artistic area. Although it is focussed on what is pictorial and plastic, it has the following objectives:

Contribute to the internalization, understanding and mastery of the visual fact as language of communication. (...) Decode the elements of plastic-visual language. Experiment with modifying advertising messages by means of, for example, colour variations. Manipulate audiovisual resources and different expression techniques. Develop imagination and personal initiative in problem solving. Communicate their own ideas or others using instruments.

(National Public Education Administration, 2006, pp. 3–5)
Apart from these curricular guidelines, in private and public institutions, there are extended timetables which offer media education through workshops, chosen freely by the students and often devoted to creative writing, photography and audiovisual, edition and post-production activities.

11.3 Institutions or Social Actors

The focus of Media Education in the past two decades has included dimensions which make us talk about “new literacy” or “multi-literacy” and to conceive MIL as a new compound concept (Grizzle & Torras Calvo, 2016, p. 44). In times of digital convergence, it is not always easy to separate areas which are intertwined. However, we will try to organize the information about the social actors and their contributions, according to the predominant focus on their definitions and lines of actions.

11.3.1 Technological and Digital Literacy: Plan Ceibal

In this dimension of media education, the most important actor in the past ten years has been the Plan of Educational Connectivity of Basic Computing for Online Learning, better known as Plan Ceibal, which delivered computers XO (locally referred to “Ceibalitas”) to students and teachers in public schools. Apart from being used at school, the computers were taken to the homes, with the idea of generating synergy and appropriation on the part of the family and the community, going beyond the school environment but being deeply connected with it.

The first stage of the Plan revolved around getting total coverage, expanding connectivity and solving the problems of the computers breaking down and of later being repaired. During the first years, the support of volunteer groups to teach how to use and solve some of the working problems was crucial. In the second stage, since 2010, platforms were developed for the management, educational evaluation and improvement of education (Contents and Resources for Education and Learning, CREA, a social educational network, an Adaptable Platform for the Learning of Mathematics, PAM) and the programme Support Teachers for Ceibal (MAC in Spanish) was implemented; both actions continue up to the present. The third stage (2013 until this date) has been destined to developing pedagogies of deep learning (Plan Ceibal, 2017, p. 25). According to official information, it currently meets the needs of 85% of the students in the country and 100% of the students who attend public education between 6 and 15 years old. Ninety-five per cent of the education centres have Internet connection (Plan Ceibal, 2017, p. 30).

Although the educational concern has always been present, Plan Ceibal has been giving a pedagogical twist until becoming the most relevant line of action in the past few years. This twist has been brought
forward as Uruguay became part in 2014 of the Global Learning Network, promoted by Michael Fullan and his project New Pedagogies for Deep Learning (Cobo, 2016, p. 50). The idea of “deep learning” consists of integrating technological tools in the classroom and to develop strategies to connect learning with the interests and life concerns of the students outside the classroom. It follows a line of projects and of the articulation of teachers of different subjects, in a learning model described by “Ceibal” as “cascading learning”.

The programme Laboratories of Digital Technologies (LabTed) is an example of the latest educational developments of “Ceibal”. They seek to answer students’ relevant questions and the result is the creation of some kind of technological artefact. The conceptual framework is the use of computing thinking to promote the use of logical thinking to identify and solve complex problems encouraging cross curricular and teamwork. It particularly focusses on robotics, programming and 3D printing. Once a year students are invited to take part in the Robotics, Programming and Video Games Olympics with the aim of exchanging learning experiences and selecting the best initiatives.

Plan Ceibal also promotes other projects of social inclusion like Jóvenes a Programar (Young people, Let’s program), which began in 2017 with the aim of teaching computing thinking to youngsters between 17 and 26 years old who have passed Basic Cycle at Secondary School. They are free courses which do not require any previous programming knowledge and in which students learn programming languages related to labour demand (Genexus, Phyton, Web Design.NET). In 2015 the “Plan Ibirapitá” was begun, aimed at elderly adults of low income: they are given a free tablet at compulsory 3-hour workshops in which they are explained its functions and use (Plan Ceibal, 2017, p. 114).

Directly related to Plan Ceibal, we find another one of the relevant actors which is the Centre for Research Ceibal Foundation, created in 2015, and whose purpose is to guide Plan Ceibal in its lines of action and promote research in areas which deal with social inclusion, technology and education, as well as the formation of national and international investigation networks.

11.3.2 Fundación Telefónica

Fundación Telefónica takes action in Uruguay through the programme Pro Future whose aim is “to bring digital education to boys and girls of vulnerable areas” in Latin America, Africa and Asia. Its line of action is defined through the objectives of development of the millennium and the promotion of inclusive, equal and quality education (Fundación Telefónica, 2016, p. 10). In Uruguay its Programa Aulas stands out, whose objective is the teaching training for the use of technologies in the classroom, coordinating with other educational institutions –schools
and non-governmental institutions—by means of the “technological classroom”, in which children and adolescents from different places are invited to develop experiences with technology guided by facilitators (Aulas Fundación Telefónica, 2018). Other programmes are: Technology for Everyone, which offers workshops for elderly adults and disabled people (Tecnología para todos, 2018) and the Robotic Code Project, meant to promote abilities and competencies in programming in children and adolescents who attend educational centres linked to the foundation (Robotic Code, 2018).

Lastly, we find the interactive and informational blog “Portal Dialogando”, aimed at the parents, with articles written in a simple way about Internet and the use of children, cyberbullying, apps, etc. It is presented as an open space for debate about everything that happens around the net, the connected devices and life of the children (Dialogando, 2018).

11.3.3 Other Actors in Media Education

In the last part of this document, we will refer to some private initiatives, although in some cases they are associated with state actors. Among them we find the group Árbol, a non-profit civil association which seeks to promote participatory education and facilitate access to technology and to the mass media to neighbourhood communities.

It arises as Proyecto Árbol (2003) which, with the support of the public channel TV Ciudad, held an annual open call to the community and to social organizations to take part in the workshops of audiovisual communication training and to develop their own audiovisual project. The transmission of the product was done through Tevé Ciudad, and also the broadcast in the place of origin of the community who made the video. In 2013 these annual calls were finalized, but the work continues with neighbour organizations with the same intention of promoting training in communication and audiovisual language, and reflection forums about the topics the groups would like to deal with in the video. In the last years, Árbol, made the programme Hacé y mostrá. Televisión comunitaria, with the aim of broadcasting the videos made (2015) and the project Jóvenes en Rec (2016) which suggested a set of workshops in training in community audiovisuals, their implementation, the neighbour projection, and the broadcast in public television (Árbol Televisión Participativa, 2018).

The educational proposal of “Árbol” cannot be explicitly defined as media education, although it is possible to identify elements consistent with the main principles of media literacy defined by UNESCO (Wilson et al., 2011). Aportes para la realización y circulación de videos comunitarios—a document to promote the communication learning of Colectivo Árbol—explains a perspective of communication inspired on some of Paulo Freire’s and Mario Kaplún’s ideas. The “dialogue
communication” and the definition ‘emirec’, which Kaplún picks up from Jean Cloutier (Kaplún, 1998), in which receptors can and must have the right to alternate both roles of reception and emission in the communicative process, are some of the central ideas (Árbol Televisión Participativa, 2012, p. 8).

Other experiences in media education are: “Taa”, a platform of audiovisual literacy which deals with teaching children and adolescents by means of workshops for creating audiovisual content; “Dodécá”, an educational institution devoted to film training for adolescents; “Uruguay Campus Film”, which offers short summer courses on audiovisual creations and the composition of audiovisual pieces.

Some film festivals share an educational aim. In this way, since 2011 the Youth Film Festival (Fenacies) has focussed its work on stimulating children and youngsters to know about audiovisual language and delivers training workshops, so that students can develop their own creations. In other cases, the main aim is not media literacy in itself, but to work on a certain theme of social interest. For example, the group Tenemos que ver. Festival de Cine y Derechos Humanos en el Uruguay (Film and Human Rights Festival in Uruguay) whose purpose is to raise awareness regarding Human Rights by means of films. The institutional frame in which it develops is the NGO Cotidiano Mujer and some of the Festival activities it promotes (since 2013) are in some way connected with media education processes. In the last Festival (June 2018), it organized a national short-film contest under the motto one minute, one right. Primary and secondary school students took part which involved the participation of teachers and practices connected with the processes in media education. The exhibit consisted of products which were selected from a screening activity and discussion on the part of the children and adolescents. Other activities which were developed in the context of the Festival were the film workshop and cinema forum.

11.4 Teacher Training

The influence of Plan Ceibal establishes the prevalence of an approach based on the inclusion of ICTs in the classroom and in the pedagogical system of teacher training. The Plan Ceibal together with Ceibal Foundation appear as institutions which emphasize this area of media education, both in the academic production and in the development of initiatives whose objective is to train teachers in the use of these technologies to then apply them to their evaluation and teaching.

As we pointed out in the section before, Fundación Telefónica Uruguay also develops actions in this field. Apart from the Programme Aulas, its website offers a wide variety of workshops for teaching training, such as Café Educativo, which proposes free workshops and virtual conferences, aimed at teachers and instructors. Different tools are
presented for the classroom, such as: ICT resources with educational potential, YouTubers, augmented reality and virtual reality (Café Educativo, 2018). At the time this article was written, the Webinar *Transmedia Narratives in the Classroom* was being offered for teachers and student teachers. This is part of *Red Didáctica*, a Postgraduate course developed in conjunction with the Training in Education Council (CFE in Spanish), NGO *El Abrojo* and Flacso Uruguay, whose objective is to implement the use of educational technologies in the teaching training degrees and to develop innovative practices for the inclusion of ICTs in the classroom (Red Didáctica, 2018).

Finally, “*Cineduca*” is an audiovisual training programme which belongs to the Training in Education Council aimed at students and teachers of the teaching degrees (primary and secondary) of the whole country. Since 2009, it has promoted educational innovation in training teachers in audiovisual literacy. It develops different workshops: script, photography, edition, production, audiovisual realization in the whole country in the presence-based or distance format. Every year, it organizes audiovisual short-film exhibitions, which were produced in the workshops.

### 11.5 Academic Production

The different works we studied show different focus and perspectives, although most of the academic production revolves around studying the impact of the implementation of Plan Ceibal and evaluating the development of this digital inclusion policy. The abundance of works exceeds our capacity of mentioning all of them here, and as a result, we have opted for relevant examples of the production in the past years.

One of the research approaches focussed on the study of the appropriations of technology in the home and in everyday life (Casamayou, 2010). These approaches aim to understand a public policy of digital inclusion, the Plan Ceibal, from the point of view of the practices and the subjects rather than measure the impact it had. This is a socio-anthropological perspective, which distances itself from technocratic visions centred on the area of access to technology. What it highlights is the need to include mediations and the uses, the sense of negotiation of the beneficiaries in their relation with the technology acquired, with the promoters of this public policy, the school and the children. A relation which appears to be ambiguous and full of contrasts and contradictions (Winocur & Sánchez Vilela, 2016).

Some of the research we studied emphasizes the importance of reading competencies as a necessary condition to improve the relationship between the individuals with the information (Ceretta & Gascue, 2014; Olascoaga Pérez & García Rivadulla, 2013) and others focus on the appropriation of technologies in connection with the digital literacy of
children and young people (Rivoir, 2016). Some of the central themes are: the educational use that young people make of digital technologies in the classroom and in the home (Lamschtein, 2016), the changes in the educational practices that secondary students experiment because of the introduction of ICTs, how students and teachers position themselves in the face of the digital infrastructure they have and the relationship with their performance (Cajarville, 2016).

Some of the authors we studied highlight that school learning not only takes place in the classroom and it becomes necessary to move to the home place, but this time to recover the competencies that students develop there. This introduces us to an approach which is connected with the inclusion of elements of informal learning. There is a wide range of methods outside the classroom which are very useful for school learning:

the search of information; checking the guidelines for secondary school homework by means of 2.0 resources which enables them to share information with other students as well as with teachers; playing games with an educational background; checking specialised resources by means of tutorials and other technical tools, in some exceptional cases it is also used for entertainment.

(Cajarville, 2016, p. 66)

In the same way, the Transmedia Literacy Project aimed to investigate those competencies which arise from the uses that young people make of ICTs every day, with the objective of including them in the classroom with the hope of finding an answer to the general crisis that the educational systems are going through (Scolari, 2018). From the study of the new media ecosystem what arises is the concept of transmedia literacy in order to analyse the collaborative and the use aspects. The acquisition of the transmedia competencies in young people gives rise to the need to consider its strengths so as to include them in everyday platforms: Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, among the most popular. In Uruguay, research was carried out on the social network Facebook and the use that young people aged 16 and 18 give to it. The most important transmedia competencies were: reading and writing competencies; visual competencies (taking and editing photos using software or other applications); collaborative practices using different dialogue and exchange platforms in order to solve problems or answer questions about video games; and competencies to use symbolic resources by means of memes, which are mainly used to express annoyance or disagreement through satire and humour (Winocur & Morales, 2018, pp. 110–111).

The teaching training and the extent of digital competencies to learn and teach those students who are studying for this profession have become another of the research fields. One of the objectives was the creation
of indicators to evaluate the didactic, curricular and methodological, personal and professional development competencies (Silva et al., 2017).

This approach understands that a “digital competent teacher” is the one who is able to “train students who need abilities, skills and competencies which allow them to make use of the digital technological resources as tools to learn in a permanent way and to play an active role in today’s society” (Wilson et al., 2011) Hence the need to develop digital competencies to “learn to teach” with the new digital technologies and that such competencies should be successfully included in the professional teaching practice (Silva et al., 2017).

Some research set out to investigate the perception teachers have of the generation and the use of information in the digital platforms, especially in the educational ones. The knowledge, the different uses, the problems and main needs identified by the teachers to develop new literacies were researched. Such is the case of the study “Digital citizenship and new literacies: exploratory study on the case of Support Teachers to Ceibal” (MAC in Spanish) (Cobo & Docetti, 2017). Support Teachers to “Ceibal” (MAC) is a programme composed of specialized teachers, which arose in 2008 to support teachers in the classroom in the implementation of the ICTs in the teaching and learning processes (p. 11).

In the line of productions around Plan Ceibal, between 2006 and 2016, the Project “Flor de Ceibo” was developed by the University of the Republic, which promoted extension, investigation and action projects: the implementation of training areas for children, centred on audiovisual language, on the use of social networks or on promoting the use of the computers XO in the classrooms (Curbelo, 2017, p. 45).

Finally, one of the most recent approaches is the one that is concerned with the everyday use of the Internet and the social networks, the possible risks or dangers which can arise in terms of security and privacy, as well as the discussion about the necessary conditions needed for a responsible and conscious use of the Internet in Uruguayan children (Dodel, Kweksilber, Aguirre, & Méndez, 2018).

The academic production in media education in Uruguay mainly occurred in the public sector: projects and publications promoted by the University of the Republic (Udelar in Spanish) and institutions endorsed by the Presidency of the Republic. Among the projects by Udelar are especially important the Observatory of Technologies in Information and Communication (Observatic in Spanish) of the School of Social Sciences (FCS in Spanish), and the School of Information and Communication (FIC in Spanish). In the private sector the Catholic University and Fundación Telefónica stand out. The institutions which financed the research have mainly been the universities involved, with the support of funds which come from the National Agency of Research and Innovation (ANII in Spanish), Plan Ceibal and in a few cases funds from
international organizations. In the past years, the Sector-specific fund of Education (Fundación Ceibal-ANII in Spanish).

Among the events that have been organized, the one that stands out is the recent Symposium of Innovation in Education for Learning 2018 (SIEA in Spanish), organized by the Catholic University of Uruguay). Its objectives were to share with the public diverse approaches and practices in innovation in education, which help transform the education in the world; for the participants to come in contact with world-renowned experts; to identify resources to help strengthen learning both inside and outside the classroom; and to share experiences with experts in innovation from different educational institutions (Simposio de Innovación Educativa, 2018).

11.6 General Assessment

Uruguay features certain characteristics which make it a special case in Latin America. One of these aspects is that it has reached important levels of equity in the distribution of income, but it maintains huge inequalities with regard to the access to knowledge. The Pisa tests, which were applied for the first time in 2003, gave rise to a report in which the country was classified as the one with the biggest educational gap. At the same time, Uruguay is a country with a narrow digital gap.

In the light of the available data, the gap in the access to knowledge together with the socio-economic situation is not being reversed by the school. On the contrary, it tends to reproduce inequality instead of offering a wider range of opportunities. Problems related to the difficulties in the education system to retain the students, to achieve good promotion percentages and to revert the delay in the school process are at the heart of the debate. The place of media literacy has to be valued in relation to its context. In this way, it appears in the legislation, it becomes part of primary and secondary school education syllabuses as a suggested theme or didactic strategy, but in the first case, its application has not been realized, and in the second, it has not achieved the status of having a specific space in the curricula. The workshops in media education (photography, audiovisual production, etc.) as extracurricular spaces in private and public institutions seem to be the most specific area in which they will continue developing. The area of media education which has been more widely developed and has been more visible in the last decade is the one that refers to competencies in handling technologies of communication, digital and computing skills. Important and successful efforts have been made in order to reduce the digital gap and Plan Ceibal has played an important part in it. The educational initiatives which have been developed in the past years believe and expect that the technological tools will improve learning. Nevertheless, the results of the evaluations reveal serious problems in the acquisition
of necessary basic competencies which may be prior to the development of media education.

The main challenges for media education in Uruguay reside in how to contribute to revert the inequality problems in the access to knowledge, using certain designs, and certain incorporation strategies of the knowledge people have because of the use of communication technologies and content in their everyday life.

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On 23 October 2018, in the act of delivery of the 27th Reina Sofía prize of Latin American Poetry, the Venezuelan citizen Rafael Cadenas said that when words like freedom, justice, democracy, civics or honesty are absent from a country, the fact of living there becomes very difficult for their citizens. He said that the words should correspond to what they designate, fundamental semantic consideration that we relate to the health of media education in a country. The congruence that ought to exist between what we have and what we live is directly proportional to our quality of life. Freedoms apart.

The system of government currently prevailing in Venezuela is neat in fallacies and relentless in the exercise of power. Here they say one thing and make another, they lie and they cheat. In the middle of hell, a paradise is named with words that only exists in fiction, in the story that enchants the beardless enraptured anxious to even dream, condemned as it is to inhuman conditions of survival. There have been in the last 20 years counted moments of interesting investment in fare causes, props, discretionary and circumstantial. We’ll name them. But let’s not fool ourselves. Our situation is, in the best consideration, tragic. It is in this Venezuela from which we write with so much enthusiasm and determination.

12.1 Socio-Political Context

The Chavez devastation is the title of the latest publication by Antonio Pasquali (2017), which describes what happened in the field of transport and communications over the last 20 years. An explicit title that the publisher proposes to expand to the rest of the national panorama, without a doubt devastated. The crisis that abuses Venezuela and the opportunities for the development of a healthy media education is more than 30 years old and can be divided into four stages: A. Economic model crisis, 1983; B. Crisis of the Institutions, 1992; C. Crisis of the Republic, 1999 and D. Humanitarian Crisis, 2014-Current. It does not cease to surprise that instead of being solved, our crisis gets worse.
12.1.1 Economic Model Crisis, 1983

The Forty years of pre-Chavismo should not be mythicized (…). “Those four decades combined successes and failures, but they were democratic and progressive” (Pasquali, 2017:103). Those years include the period of “Saudi Venezuela”, which had its heyday in 1973 and increased the welfare state of Venezuelans to levels of frenzy, while weakening their young institutions and their economy. University institutes dedicated to each of the development areas were created, including the Instituto de Investigaciones de la Comunicación (ININCO) of the Universidad Central de Venezuela. The publications of local research were frequent and their quality definitive. It seemed to be a developing country, with inflation below 1%.

This bonanza lasted just over a decade; with inexhaustible oil and mining resources, the economic sectors that would allow national development were neglected. The economic model crisis has its landmark on February 18, 1983 (“Black Friday”) when the second control of change of the democratic era is established. Between 1979 and 1989 wages went down which changed the Venezuelans pattern of consumption. Failed attempts to liberate the economy and a disorderly state produced a breakdown that had an impact on all sectors of society. These were times when it was natural to discuss these issues in determining social and political areas and in which Venezuelan democracy was a reference in the region.

12.1.2 Crisis of the Institutions, 1992

In 1988, Carlos Andrés Pérez was elected for the presidential period 1989–1993. One sector of the country hoped that its government would magically return the frenzy and fortune experienced during his first government during 1974–1979. Perez thought his popularity would suffice to make the changes. The way the strategies for recovering the economy were implemented were decisive in their failure. Starting his government, as soon as February 1989, with unpopular measures triggered “El Caracazo”, a citizen’s rebellion implying the disappearance of 2,000 people by violent actions of the armed forces. In 1992, two coup d’état attempts shook democratic stability. President Perez did not conclude his mandate. He was removed by the Congress of the Republic in the year 1993.

Hugo Chávez had appeared on the national stage following the failed coup d’état of 4 February 1992 that brought him to prison. By 1996 annual inflation reached an inexcusable 103%. Venezuela by then was a fragmented society, in which anti-politics gained strength and hindered opportunities for real participation. In 1998, fundamental child protection laws appeared that constituted important advances in the media education field.
12.1.3 Crisis of the Republic, 1999

For the elections of 1998 a candidate was sought among the recent heroes, and there was Chávez, a military dreamer, with four years of campaign on the slopes. Thanks to the national deterioration and his media role obtained as the leader of the coup, from a certain common opinion he was thought to be a good alternative. Thus, Hugo Chavez became president in February 1999, doubling the votes of his opponent.

The regime established by Chávez will convene elections while restricting civil and political rights and liberties as well as access to information and communication.

In addition, by 2003, a rise in oil prices brought an income never seen in the history of the country. Populist actions multiply in the form of “missions” and spasmodic actions ranging from education programs in media promoted by the National Film Library in the Bolivarian schools, to the distribution of arms and ammunition for the defense of the Revolution, as well as health and housing “missions”. Everything was allowed in the expense of such exorbitant wealth. All necessary support is purchased in and out of the country. Moreover, the opacity of accountability reports grows to the point where they simply stop.

For 14 years, what initially was partiality and dependence of the public authorities and the administration of justice to the Presidency, became also the presence of members of the Colombian guerrillas in Venezuelan territory, Cuban interference in the high-ranking army and military forces linked to drug trafficking and smuggling operations.

From 2007 oil prices began to fall. Then, favoring the revolution justified the neglect of vital areas such as health, safety, food and education.

In 2011, a sick Chavez announced his participation in the elections of 2012. On 7 October 2012 he was re-elected for the fourth consecutive time. In a national media transmission in December 2012, the so-called “succession” took place, in which he sought to favor the Vice-President Nicolas Maduro in future elections. Chávez’s death was announced on 5 March 2013 amid protests for greater information transparency. It is the end of the so-called Chávez era and the beginning of the Chavismo without Chavez period. Again, in times of abundance, no economic forecasts were taken, but now, moreover, there are no institutions, no democracy and no republican system for the containment of the outcome.

12.1.4 Humanitarian Crisis, 2014-Current

When Nicolás Maduro assumes the presidency for the period 2013–2019 in April 2013, it is no longer even thought to preserve the forms. Fallacy and crime become the norm, and the revolutionary elite acts at
its leisure during the last five years. Horrifying scenario that Antonio Pasquali (2017) describes as:

He killed many by dissupplying the country from medicines and criminally preventing the entry of humanitarian aid; He starved and humiliated people by putting them to rummage in the rubbish, extreme poverty elevated to 52% (…) failed to lessen the immense tragedy of the nearly 30,000 homicides a year (…) 9,000 of whose victims are children or teenagers (…) generated by negligence chronic insufficiency of electricity and water; He did not flinch to the looting of three hundred billion dollars and generated to the country the highest inflation and lowest GDP in the world; Degraded (…) PDVSA and (…) The grandiose Guyanese projects of democracy; Drove of the country the best of a costly educated youth [ultimately], embarked with contraptions the country in a extemporaneous Communist adventure in a historical moment when 46 countries of the Earth disembark from it.

(p. 101)

Pasquali supports with figures the Venezuelan ruin of highways, roads, car industry, railway, aquatic and aerial, portrays the vast regression that occurred in postal, printed, telephone, radio and electronic communications. He qualifies this devastation as a “deliberate and planned attempt to isolate communication” [he produces], “effects of dissocializing (by pursuing a divide et impera) and dehumanizing (one denies the other, the supreme anti-humanist crime, said Simone Weil)” (p. 11). Pasquali mentions that “limiting, modifying, confiscating, regulating or circumventing outside the social contract, by coercion, our natural propensity to issue and receive messages in all freedom” as “a social and political outrage of supreme gravity, because it disfigures and locks the very basis of [our] possibility and way of living with each other, communicating” (2017, p. 11). These successive crises lead experts to calculate inflation for 2018 over 500.000%, which greatly hampers educational work in general and media education in particular.

12.2 Regulatory Framework

The Venezuelan normative framework recognizes the role of the media in the educational process since 1980. What appears then just pointed out, will find development in the Organic Law of Protection of the Boy, Girl and Adolescent (Lopna, 2000 2007). This exposes the responsibility of the Venezuelan State to guarantee children and adolescents the right to freedom of expression (Art. 67), the right to information (Art. 68) and the right to critical education for the communication media (Art. 69). The latter notes that “The state must ensure an education aimed at
making them and training them to receive, search, use and appropriately select the information relevant to its development. Paragraph one: Critical education for the media must be incorporated into education plans and programs, and compulsory subjects. Paragraph two: The State, with the active participation of society, must guarantee to all children, adolescents and their families programs on critical education for the media.” It is worth highlighting the role of the communications expert from the Ininco-UCV, Elizabeth Safar, in the inclusion of this article.

On the other hand, in the controversial law on Social responsibility in Radio and television (RESORTE, 2004; RESORTEME, 2011), it is foreseen the citizens’ organization for the development of training, research and dissemination activities aimed at education for the perception Media criticism. It also advocates the creation of the Social Responsibility Fund (FRS) as a boost to the same areas. In the Organic Law of Education (2009) in force, the need to create “the conditions for the articulation between education and the media, with the purpose of developing critical and reflective thinking, the capacity to build Permanent mediation between the family, the school and the community” (Art. 6, literal G) is recommended. Furthermore, article 9 envisages the incorporation of “training units to contribute to the knowledge, understanding, use and critical analysis of the contents of the social media”. In the written texts, the three laws draw the basis for the establishment of a public policy in the area, but the actions are still timid. In relation to the study programs, in Venezuela coexist the National Basic Curriculum (1997) based on the Constitution of 1961 and the National Bolivarian Curriculum (2007) elaborated under the guidelines of the Constitution of 1999. The first one contemplates that the student “assume a reflective and critical attitude to the messages received through the various media”; “It interprets harmful advertising messages, adopting attitudes of rejection” (CNB. 6th grade, 1997). In the programs of the first to the third stages of basic education, the contents that relate to the media education appear disaggregated in areas like language and literature, sciences of the nature and technology, social sciences and aesthetic education.

In the framework document of the public action of the present Government, the Plan of the Homeland 2013–2019² is established as priority to “continue building the sovereignty and communicational democratization” (1.1.5), and the right to the information and exercise of Communication is guaranteed (1.1.5.1). It also notes the need to “strengthen the responsible and critical use of public, private and community media as instruments for the formation of Bolivarian Values” (1.1.5.2). Invaluable aspects for the establishment of a media education policy. However, during the last decade, one of the most attacked areas is communication. The suffocation of universities and schools, acts of censorship, closure of media and attacks on journalists are a clear example of this; therefore, the above-noted proposals of the Nation’s Plan are dead letter.
12.3 Institutions or Social Actors

Hernández (2005) said that “it was very difficult to create a minimal history of the media education in our country, since the experiences have been in many cases ephemeral and in others, unfortunately, there is no historical and bibliographic record” (2010, p. 9). Also Castillo and Gastaldi (2005), stated that in the Ibero-American countries there was no subject exclusively dedicated to education in the media, ignoring these authors the various experiences generated in the Venezuelan context. Thirteen years later, we delineated some master lines on this field of work, from the four social actors that promote media education in the country: (1) Public institutions, (2) civil society, (3) private enterprise and (4) universities. These actors have developed their actions in five areas: (a) Media and digital literacy, with emphasis on critical media readings; (b) training of trainers (from subjects, courses, workshops, seminars and postgraduate programs); (c) research (working groups, projects and research lines, articles, undergraduate and postgraduate thesis, promotion work, books and book chapters, research awards; blogs and digital publications); (d) spaces for the dissemination of experiences or exhibition (festivals, exhibitions, meetings, international seminars, forums and colloquiums, among others); and (e) creation of content linked to media education circulating through different formats and media.

Between the years 1974 and 2017, we have posted 65 media education initiatives that have elements of good practices in media education. These are characterized because they: Have a reproducible Know-how, have multiplier effects, provide the opportunity to be a user and producer of content, generate new knowledge and propose new articulations with the media and the use of playful strategies (to communicate, 2005). These include those generated by public institutions: The Child’s foundation (Communication for Children Program, 1996), National Film Foundation (“Youth program, 1994–1998”; “Cinema in the school”, 2001–2002), Fundación de Medios Audiovisuales al Servicio de la Educación EDUMEDIA (training program for teachers in Service, 2000), Foundation Villa of Cinema (“Integral Workshop for Children and Adolescents T.I.N.A.”, 2014) and the Colombeia Foundation (“at only one click” and “School of filming”, 2015).

From civil society, it is worth naming the Children’s Museum, 1974; The Children’s film Festival Foundation of Ciudad Guayana (Foundation), 1989; “Yakari” Civil association with the project “with its own gaze”, 1997; Radio Fe y Alegría Pedregal 105.7 FM, project “Network of school Stations”, 2001; Pedagogical project of Classroom “enjoying the radio and the TV” of Radio Perola, 2004; Center of Image creation and research, with “look at the other”, 2004; Cooperativa ANCLA2: Digital Photography for children, 2005; Group of Performing Arts and
Musical Expression Ixoye (International Meeting of Teaching Communicators (Educomunicadores), School of Cinema, Infantile and Juvenile Audiovisual and International Festival of Audiovisual Infantile and Juvenile, 2011) and Exhibition of “Cinema up in the classrooms” of the Foundation Network of educative audiovisual producers of Monagas State (2014).

Noteworthy are “EPM Venezuela”, a program aimed at educating parents, students and teachers in the scope of the Communication Teaching (Educomunicación) as an object of study and teaching-learning strategy (WEB School Zone, 2012) and the project “E-Ducar, Core education training for responsible audiovisual consumption”, through which children and adolescents become literate in the image and use of audiovisual equipment to critically look at media content and create their own audiovisual messages.


The work of the universities is perhaps the one that has had more projection and durability, it focuses on the diverse spaces of action, namely: The teaching, the research, the extension and the university management.

12.4 Teacher Training

One of the main purposes of the media education is the formation of educomunicadores (educommunication professionals) teachers, cultural promoters, families, etc., an action that in Venezuela is carried out from different spaces, and especially from some universities. It is noted that although there is legislation that covers media education, in most schools of education and in teacher training centers, this is non-existent. So training for media education is an exception and not the norm.

At the Universidad Central de Venezuela, “specialization in education for the creative use of television” is active, attached to the postgraduate programs of the Faculty of Humanities and Education and the Institute of Communication Research (ININCO). This program, which is the only one in the country, was created in the year 2005 on the initiative of Oscar Lucien, Gustavo Hernández and Morella Alvarado, the members of the research line “education, communication and media”. As antecedents are the virtual classrooms project in media and the international seminars in education for the creative use of media, carried out since 2001. In addition, it is important to mention the colloquiums “media, Childhood and youth: approaches and Experiences”, aimed at sharing practices and updating the national and International educomunicativa
reality, the workshop “Citizens warned: rumors, false news and Informative opacity” and the laboratory of Visual and Digital culture, all attached to Ininco. This specialized research line has six fields of action: (1) Design, production and evaluation of didactic materials; (2) audiovisual and multimedia content production; (3) application work in formal and non-formal educational environments; (4) communicative management; (5) media education research; and (6) good practices in media education (Alvarado, 2010; Hernández, 2014).

In the rest of the universities, the training in media education is present in the contents that are taught through some subjects offered in various undergraduate and postgraduate courses, or through training actions not leading to titles such as diplomas, seminars, workshops or courses. The Universidad Monteávila includes the subject “information and communication” given to the students of the undergraduate degree in education of the Preschool and Integral options. The Universidad Católica Andrés Bello (UCAB), which in the year 1995, held the “II meeting of Civil Society, media and citizen responsibility”. Currently, the UCAB will integrate media education in the contents of the postgraduate program Educación para el desarrollo and, in 1996, Mónica Bellot and Belén Morales, proposed to create an Educommunication Catedra in the School of Education.

The Universidad Pedagógica Experimental Libertador (UPEL), in combination with the Instituto de Mejoramiento Profesional del Magisterio (IMPM), included, in 1999, the subject “communication media and education” as non-compulsory matter within the Specialization in Integral education in a course of distance training, as well as the course of “Spanish language to develop the critical comprehension”, in the Instituto Pedagógico de Caracas (2009). In the Universidad de Los Andes (ULA) and the Universidad Bicentenaria de Aragua (UBA), media education is part of the contents of some subjects as well.

The Universidad del Zulia (LUZ), jointly with the Audiovisual Department of the Directorate of Culture, have carried out the “Maracaibo’s university cinema club”, which for more than 50 years has promoted important media literacy actions. Also, the Universidad Nacional Experimental Rafael María Baralt (UNERMB), jointly with the Manuel Trujillo Durán Foundation and the “Centro Nacional Autónomo de Cinematografía” (CNAC), created the diploma “Cinema in the Classroom”, with locations in the city of Anaco and Ciudad Bolívar, in partnership with the Training School of Film and the Foundation Festival de Cine Infantil de Ciudad Guayana (FUNDACIN).

The Universidad Bolivariana de Venezuela (UBV) proposes the realization of projects in the area of media education through the degree program of training in social communication, the production and recreation of knowledge and the socio-educational integration, a proposal in which the Center for Studies of Social Communication collaborates.
From the Universidad Indígena de Venezuela, the project “Jatta Wöötanö – Yekuana ethno-communicators” was generated in 2014, dedicated to the formation of indigenous youth in digital media and the appropriation of information and communication technologies in order to generate contents with the idea of “providing participants with mechanisms that allow them to orient and strengthen their own processes of awareness, reflection and appropriation towards the digital social media” (Raising Voices, 2014).

12.5 Academic Production

Academic production around media education comes primarily from universities and, to a lesser extent, from other spaces. In the case of the Universidad Central de Venezuela (UCV), the research work developed in the late 1960s, by Jesús Rosas Marcano is emphasized, who inspired in the work of Celestin Freinet, promoted the topic of journalism made by children and for children and the advances in the area of critical analysis of audiovisual media, conducted by Antonio Pasquali and Ángel Ara, in the audiovisual department of the School of Journalism and audiovisual education activities, promoted from the School of Education.

During the last 30 years, we find that the main research actions are gestated inside the Ininco-UCV. The work of degree “Educational proposal for the active perception of the audiovisual media of mass diffusion” (1987), written by Gustavo Hernández in The School of Arts, inaugurated what later was transformed in the line of investigation “Education, Communication and Media” (2001), giving rise to an academic production that is expressed in articles, books, chapters of books, promotion papers and undergraduate/postgraduate thesis.

The development of the research line has been ordered by Hernández (2013) in four periods of time or momentum. First momentum: Exploration (1987–1992): Concerns focus on exploring methodologies aimed at sensitizing the reflective and creative reading of mass messages, both in the formal school system and in non-formal educational settings (grassroots communities, non-governmental organizations, parents’ school, educational initiatives of civil society, just to mention some spaces of socialization).

(Hernández, 2013, p. 31)

Second momentum: Institutionalization (1993–2001), when inside the Ininco, the discussions to formalize the lines of investigation take place, among them, the line “education, communication and media”, the fundamental base for the research linked to media education in the UCV. This moment coincides with the approval of three research projects, financed by the Consejo de Desarrollo Científico y Humanístico
of the Universidad Central de Venezuela (CDCH-UCV): (1) “Television and children: communication and education for the active perception of Television” (1991). (2) “Curricular proposal to promote the creative active perception of television in the subject Castilian and literature, 7°, 8° and 9th year of high school”. (3) “Television and children: elaboration of a program for the active perception of television, for the foundation of the Child”, which served as a basis for the promotion paper “Education for the active perception of the TV: Methodological proposal to form facilitators in the Basic Education Cycle” (1995). Subsequently, the projects “education in the Media” (financed by the Congress of the Republic) and “General Theory of Education for the media: pedagogical strategies for the formal and informal school system in Venezuela” (2000) were created, economically supported by the Consejo de Desarrollo Científico y Humanístico of the Universidad Central de Venezuela. Ties are established with the Sistema de Actualización Docente del Profesorado de la UCV.

Third momentum: Professionalization (2002–2005), creation of two postgraduate programs, in which the line of research is fundamental: Master in Social Communication and specialization in education for the creative use of television. The National Council of Culture (CONAC in Spanish), through the Direction of film and photography, financed the project “Virtual Classroom: Learning to watch TV” (2002), developed by Morella Alvarado, Gustavo Hernández and Oscar Lucien, a project that also obtained funding from the Asociación de Televisones Educativas y Culturales Iberoamericanas (ATEI in Spanish). From this experience was developed the thesis developed by Morella Alvarado “Teach and learn to watch TV. Multimedia course in education for the creative use of media”, aimed at teachers of 5th and 6th grade of the II stage of Basic Education (2004), final work of Master in multimedia educational at the Universidad de Barcelona, Catalonia. In that year, the project “To look at the other: audiovisual communication for the citizen coexistence” obtains the prize fund of mixed contributions to the arts. In a second stage, this project was financed by the National Council of Culture (CONAC). Fourth momentum: Consolidation (2006–2013), development of new research projects “Integration of the media in the Basic School” (2007) and “Theoretical-methodological foundations of education for the creative use of the media from an Interdisciplinary Perspective” (2007), developed by Morella Alvarado, both with financing from the CDCH-UCV. The latter resulted in the promotion paper “the Latin American gaze in the communication teaching (Educomunicación). Basic concepts for Venezuelan Communication Teachers (Educomunicadores)” (2010). Alexandra Ranzolín joined Ininco’s research team. Fifth momentum: Integration (2014-current): New areas of interest are opened with the inclusion of video games as a theme, with the projects “expert video players: Beyond appearances” and “video games in the classroom: a proposal associated with the development of Critical
thinking”. The study of advertising, photography, the emotional dimension of the media and the expressive forms imposed by the digital culture are added to it. Research-action groups are formed with graduates from the specialization in education for the creative use of television and the Master in communication. At this moment, the observatory of the Communication Teaching (Educomunicación) Jesús Rosas Marcano is gestated.

In the Universidad Pedagógica Experimental Libertador (UPEL) and the Lisandro Alvarado Nucleus of Geo-historical Researches, the research line “Educomunicación” (Communication Teaching) is kept active, with Dr. Diogenes Molina in charge of it.

The Audiovisual Department of the Directorate of Culture of the LUZ, the “Cinema Club Universitario de Maracaibo”, formalized in the year 1999, the “Pedagogy of Communication” line of research, and systematizes the work done for more than 30 years, in schools and high schools of Zulia state, with Emperatriz Arreaza and Rita Elena Avila at the head. The Universidad de Los Andes also has an important list of research works in the area of media education and educomunicación, among which highlight those developed by Jacqueline Sánchez Carrero, Wilson Agudelo and Jenny Bustamante Newball. The Universidad Bolivariana de Venezuela highlights the contributions of Karina Quintero and Maurice Brunner.

In relation to public funding for training and research in media education, Alvarado (2008) points out that three years after the FRS was promulgated, for the first time they assigned to civil society the financial resources for the realization of projects. In the month of February 2007, a first assignment was made for an amount of approximately $4,822,755.47. Of the total allocated amount, only 1.4%, was allocated to education activities for critical perception. The E-ducar project, previously named, was the first project in media education funded by the FRS. It must be emphasized, without surprise, that research activities do not have any kind of resource allocation. By 2014, seven years later, the support provided by the FRS in the area called “Communication-related training” reached the figure of ten projects, of a total of 390 that requested funds. The area of education for critical media reception was transformed into “communication-related training”, so the advances that gave priority to the critical dimension fade, to expand and give a painful setback in which everything is accepted, simply providing that the word education appears. The specificity involved in critical media reading is converted to the so-called communication training, such a huge screen that projects such as the “workshop action reflection, facing the communicational hegemony” or “multiplying the images of the popular power for a communal reconstruction” (Conatel, 2014). Both with an obvious propaganda action. Whereas in the area of investigation, in which four projects were approved (1.02%), the perspectives show a
positivist position: for example, the project “Evaluation of the impact of the electromagnetic waves of telecommunications equipment in the scholastic performance”. During 2016, the call of the FRS was limited to eight projects of multimedia audiovisual realization related to human rights and foreign policy and the activities of training and investigation were excluded. There are no records on calls from 2017 and 2018.

The research products in the area are mainly disseminated through the Ininco yearbook – Communication Investigations, the communication magazine of the Gumilla Center, the publications sponsored by the National Autonomous Cinematography Centre; Editions of the Universidad Católica Andrés Bello and Monte Ávila editors, among others. They emphasize “Manual of audiovisual media in the Basic School” (2002) of the National Film Foundation, “Learning to watch television at school” (2008) by Gustavo Hernández Díaz and “Cinema as a tool for critical media teaching” (2016) by Rita Elena Ávila.

12.6 General Appraisal

Our reality shows contradictions in the defense and promotion of media education as a space for the formation of critical and creative points of view in children and adolescents, to foster democratic participation. The so-called 21st century socialism, a guideline under which the so-called Bolivarian Revolution is registered, has meant for media education a space of relative recognition and of profound contradictions. While training in critical glances about media content in some legal spaces is mentioned, it remains to define the ultimate meaning of this intention and its materialization. It is possible to observe that the principles set out in the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (1999)—such as freedom, democracy or respect for human rights—which must support the exercise of this critical training—are, at the moment, disarticulated, violated and in need of attention. On the one hand, the training processes to acquire critical looks around the media content are protected and on the other, government initiatives are promoted such as propagandistic, militaristic and violent communicational guerrillas. Meanwhile, the national education system demands actions that allow it to integrate media education in its classrooms, with proposals that go from programs oriented towards the formation of citizenship, to experiences that promote the rational use of the digital media to everyday life.

The situation of media education in Venezuela does not lack proposals by the various actors, but it suffers from the de-articulation between those who should draw up agreements to integrate the various initiatives through coherent, systematic and inclusive public policies, allowing them to provide solid financing strategies, above all, framed in the principles of freedom and autonomy.
The call for attention to the importance of implementing a comprehensive media education is fundamental, irrespective of the great urgency currently experienced by the Venezuelan family, facing 82% of poverty (Freitez, 2017) and almost 30% of projected unemployment for 2018 (IMF, 2017), in the context of a failed political project that led the country to one of the most severe crises of its history.

The children, teenagers and young people who inhabit the Venezuelan territory will inexorably continue to linking with the media and while this unstoppable reality is manifest, education is a determining and transversal factor, to achieve healthy and productive relations with media. We continue to believe in our work, in spite of our difficult current circumstances.

Notes

1 
Chavismo, a term introduced into Venezuelan Spanish lexicon due to particular circumstances during the two last decades and which spread out on most Spanish speaking countries. It denotes aspects implied in the socio-political processes related to Hugo Chavez.

2 Document prepared by the national Executive, which contains the general guidelines through which the public action will be directed during each presidential period. It is also known as the nation’s plan.

3 The dates proposed by Hernández Díaz have been modified from the localized findings for this publication.

References


Part II

Critical essays
13 Educommunication landmarks in Latin America

What should be considered in the last 50 years

Ismar de Oliveira Soares

13.1 Film and TV, Media Education in the 1960s and 1970s

The history of media education in Latin America over the last 50 years can be seen through projects that have been successfully implemented over time or through the context that define their meanings in social practice.

The first programs in the continent started in the middle of the 1960s, predominantly focused on the analysis of films. Those were implemented especially by students in the universities (Cineclub movements), as well as in some religious schools from an anthropological, political or moral perspective. It used to be a very rich time for a cultural interchange of experiences.

It was precisely the strong interest in film production that justified the introduction of cinema analysis as part of the children’s cultural activities in many schools. The most recognized project in this area was the Plan Deni. This project – conceived by Luis Campos Martínez in 1967 in Quito, Ecuador – became known as a creative educational methodology. According to the Cuban researcher Pablo Ramos (2000), Plan Deni could be considered the first educommunication experience in the continent: this is the reason why this project expanded to the Dominican Republic, Uruguay, and Brazil, throughout the subsequent decades. The project had the following objectives: (1) to investigate the attitude of children in front of the cinema and (2) to experiment on how educators can use the cinema to improve the human development of the child in school and in relation to their families.

Brought to Brazil, Plan Deni was renamed Cinema and Education (CINEDUC). It attended primarily kids in private schools. The training courses lasted three years and ended with the production of a Super-8 movie. Between 1970 and 1980, more than 1,500 students participated in this project each year, and 110 films were produced by kids. The film analysis and production eventually went to public schools, remaining until now as the main focus of the Media Education program in the state of Rio de Janeiro.
Additionally, starting in the 1970s, in Latin America as well as in the rest of the world, the Media Education focus aggregated printed media and, mainly, television production. The predominant theoretical tendency in the TV studies at this period was the theory of effects of the behavioralist Skinner. This theory points to an inevitable “social learning”, with the belief that television strongly impacted the daily lives of millions of children and young people (Skinner, 1970). The Media Education projects would then aim to protect them against such damages.

This perspective was reinforced by American scholars like Lasswell and Schramm. According to them, the effectiveness of the communication process was mainly guaranteed by the sender’s prevalence over the receiver (Schramm & Roberts, 1971). Consequently, in the educational process, it was advisable to know the nature of the message received by kids since such knowledge could empower them preventing against inappropriate content.

13.2 The Ideological Approach

In Latin America, moreover, many of the media education promoters working with popular groups in the communities added another perspective. They systematically used “media analysis” to reinforce the critical awareness of audiences, vis-à-vis the political concept of “cultural invasion”, as a result of the powerful media production coming constantly from the Northern Hemisphere. It was identified as an ideological approach. This kind of popular training programs for audiences had been developed fundamentally not in schools, but at the boundaries of educational systems, in the neighborhoods and in rural areas, under Paulo Freire’s educational perspective.

Many media professionals and intellectuals associated themselves with religious and educators, geared towards this popular education, offering subsidies to the media criticism movement. Indeed, at that time, there was a harsh reaction from Latin American thinkers to the growing influence of global media, especially the television, including news and entertainment. Part of the criticism was linked to the sociological theory of cultural dependence while the other part was connected to the study of the economic and political structures that sustained and influenced all forms of communication. The work with media education was deeply influenced by these tendencies.

The leaders in the field believed that mostly by studying the environment in which the audience receives the media information combined with the knowledge around the various ideological, cultural and social-political aspects that explain the media’s influence in society could guarantee the understanding of the processing and creation of meaning by the audience when in front of the media messages.
13.3 Communication for Social Development

The Latin American movement around participatory communication followed the ideological approach. The Latin American movement around participatory communication began in the 1980s. This social perspective represented a theoretical review based on the contribution of Latin American Communication Scholars integrated by profiles similar to those like: Luis Ramiro Beltrán (Bolivia), Antonio Pasquali (Venezuela), Juan Díaz Bordenave (Paraguay), Paulo Freire (Brazil), Mario Kaplún and Daniel Prieto (Argentina), Eduardo Contreras (Ecuador), Maria Cristina Mata (Argentina), and many others.

To better understand this phenomenon, the books of Bordenave and Carvalho (1979), and of Daniel Prieto Castillo (1984, 2008), gave a theoretical basis and illustrated how to implement projects of social intervention in the field of participatory communication for social development. In terms of training of specialists in this field, one of the institutions with the greatest legacy was the International Center for Advanced Studies of Communication for Latin America (Ciespal), based in Quito, Ecuador.

The strength of Latin American concepts in the field of communication for social development, with an emphasis on participatory planning, has had a profound impact on the construction of the concept of educommunication.

13.4 Communication as a Cultural Resistance

It was precisely in the sphere of social development that UNESCO focused its presence in the continent, aiming to integrate communication and education to public policies.

To that end, the organization promoted what was called the “Major Project” of Education in Latin America and the Caribbean. Consequently, in April of 1981, UNESCO convened ministers of education in Quito to specify actions in the areas of media use in schools as well as in critical education in relation to mass messages. As a result of this deliberation, UNESCO expanded its presence in the continent, supporting, among other actions, the Latin American seminars on television critical analysis, held successively with the presence of university representatives and professors, researchers, educators, media makers, and non-profit-organizations coordinators, from all over the continent, in 1985 (Santiago, Chile), 1986 (Curitiba, Brazil), and 1988 (Buenos Aires, Argentina), with a synthesis in 1990 (Las Vertientes, Chile).¹

The seminars found that media educators connected to the “Major Project” had gradually abandoned the manipulative perspective originated from the so-called Frankfurt School. They were no longer working from rigid theories, much less from the moralism of some religious
tendencies. In fact, they sought for a synthesis that gave coherent support to an effective fight for the democratization of the communication policies in the continent based on the proposal to establish a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO or NOMIC in Spanish).

In connection to this perspective, the Communication Department of the Latin American Episcopal Council (CELAM), especially in the light of the assembly held in Medellin, Colombia, chose to implement a pastoral work on the continent that privileged popular communication. In Brazil, the Critical Analysis of Communication Project promoted by the Brazilian Christian Communication Union (UCBC) represented, at this time, the most known effort to promote media education all around the country.

In spite of the singularity of these proposals, the media education projects in that period could be considered as a qualified instance of cultural resistance, being implemented within the scope of the popular movement. The school remained outside of this process. And it was precisely for the purpose of collaborating with the school systems around the world that UNESCO worked hard since the 1980s, starting with the Grünwald Congress in Germany, on 1982. In this event, a joint statement from 19 countries defined the concept of media education. In line with the same ideal, the work done by sociologists of education, like Maria Luiza Belloni (Bévort & Belloni, 2009), gained prominence in Brazil during this period. Gradually, the educational system began to receive influences from the UNESCO engagement.

13.5 The Cultural Studies’ Influence

Throughout the 1990s, the efforts done in the previous decade were reinforced by the British perspective of the Cultural Studies, under Raymond Williams, Stuart Hall, Len Masterman, and David Buckingham influences. From Williams, media educators learned that culture is a socio-historical process that creates and assimilates meanings (Williams, 1965, 1968, 2000). From Stuart Hall they learned that the audience defines itself both as the recipient and as the source of the message (Hall, 1980). In other words, the influence of the British Studies – revised in Latin America by Jesús Martín-Barbero and Guillermo Orozco – took the object of the analysis from the technology stimulus to the mediation processes. Masterman and Buckingham consolidated the cultural perspective to the media education pedagogy (Masterman, 1985).

Such a paradigm shift made possible, therefore, to move media education from a theory based on the technicality, centered on the media, to an articulated reflection of communication practices understood as cultural flows, focused on the space of beliefs, customs, dreams, and fears that shape the culture of daily life.
13.6 The Media Education Ibero-American Programs

Also, by the beginning of the 1990s, some activities administered by universities or cultural centers in the field of media education gained prominence in the continent. Among them: “TV Reception Project” (University of Lima, Peru); Formation for Professors in Pedagogy of the Social Media (University of Playa Ancha, Chile); “Critical Reading Workshops” (Centro Guarura, Venezuela); “Audiovisual Universe of the Latin American Child” (Cuba); “Plan Dani” (Ecuador); and the “Critical Reading of Communication” program, maintained by UCBC.

In 1994, the Organization of Ibero-American States (OAS) decided to mobilize public schools to offer the same opportunities to its students. Countries such as Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Spain, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela committed their Ministries of Education in this operation.

13.7 The Support of Scientific Journals

At the same time, Spain and Brazil decided to create their own scientific journals to serve people engaged in the relationship between communication and education. We are talking about the Revista Comunicar (University of Huelva) founded in 1993, and the Revista Comunicação e Educação (University of São Paulo) that appeared in 1994.

Undoubtedly, Comunicar has been guaranteeing during the last 25 years the most relevant international place for a cultural perspective and dissemination of media education practices. The journal is today a quarterly, bilingual Spanish-English research journal, with additional Chinese and Portuguese abstracts, focused on Educommunication (communication and education, ICT, audiences, new languages). Articles, authors and topics have a decidedly international outlook. In its 25th year, the magazine has published 1770 research articles. It appears in 654 international databases, journal impact assessment platforms, selective directories, specialized portals and hemerographic catalogues.

The Brazilian biannual magazine Communication & Education is committed to disseminating content that allows the communicator, the educator, and the educommunicator to know and use the means, with a view to achieving goals for the development of critical thinking, committed to social rights, democracy and citizenship. In addition to critically analyzing the media, the magazine advocates for knowledge that allows readers to reflect on how we appropriate the languages of communication for production of other possible narratives in the construction of democracy, citizenship, and respect for human rights. In 2014, Communication & Education was considered one of the four most useful references for postgraduate students in the field of Social Communication.
Today, it registers recognition of national and international institutions, such as the Coordination for Academic Personnel Improvement (CAPES in Portuguese) with Qualis (classification B2) and EC3 (Research Group Evaluation of Science and Scientific Communication), University of Granada, Spain, classification Q2. In 2017, the two scientific journals established a fruitful partnership.

13.8 1996/2000 – Transcontinental Connections

In addition to those scientific journals, several intercontinental mobilizations improved the experiences in the field, such as the following ones:

1º. In 1996, the V International Congress on Pedagogy of Imaxe (Pé de Imaxe) was organized by the University of Coruña, Spain, under Roberto Aparici coordination. The event has been thought to favor the creation of a place to gather (for the first time) experts from Europe, Australia, North America, and Latin America, seeking to begin a dialogue on the different perspectives about media education around the world. The WCME – World Council for Media Education – was created. The meeting honored Mario Kaplún for his contribution to media analysis for (and with) community people, in Latin America.

2º. The WCME organized the second meeting in São Paulo, in May 1998. All the invited experts remained in the country for the 1st International Congress on Communication and Education, organized by the São Paulo University’s Nucleus of Communication and Education (NCE/USP). The concept of Educommunication has been a topic in the dialogue with visitors from five continents. Three of those returned to São Paulo, in 2018, 20 years later for the 2nd International Congress: Teresa Quiroz from Peru, Carolyn Wilson from Canada, and Guillermo Orozco from Mexico.

3º. In 2000, The Central University of Bogotá invited Ibero-American experts (Jesús Martín-Barbero, Guillermo Orozco, Jorge Huergo, Ismar de Oliveira Soares, Guilherme Fernando Torres, Aníbal Ford, Joan Ferrés Prats, Rosa María Alfaro Moreno, Maritza López de la Roche, among others), asking about the results of the most recent of their research on the field. With the socialized production, Carlos Eduardo Valderrama organized a book called Comunicación-Educación: coordenadas, abordajes y travesías (Valderrama, 2000). The Bogota meeting realized that, for some of these experts, the communication/education could be considered, in Latin America, as a specific interface of social practice.

13.9 1997/2002: Research on Communication and Education

Among the major research studies that define the profile of media education at the turn of the millennium, three themes are prevalent: (1) the
communication/education relationship, in the context of digital culture; (2) the critical and active consumption of media, and (3) the singularity of the birth of an interdisciplinary autonomous field.

The first subject was worked mostly by researchers such as Jesus Martín Barbero, from Colombia La educación desde la comunicación (Martín Barbero, 2002); José Manuel Pérez Tornero, Spain, Comunicación y educación en la sociedad de la información. Nuevos lenguajes y conciencia crítica (Pérez Tornero, 2000); and María Teresa Quiroz, Peru, Por una educación que integre el pensar y el sentir: El papel de las Tecnologías de la Información y la Comunicación, (Quiroz, 2003).

The second one, by experts as Guillermo Orozco, Mexico Educación, medios de difusión y generación de conocimientos: hacia una pedagogía crítica de la representación (Orozco, 1996), and J. Ignacio Aguaded, Spain, La educación para la comunicación: la enseñanza de los medios en el contexto iberoamericano (Aguaded, 1995).

And finally the third one, by thinkers such as: José Luiz Braga and Regina Calazans, Brazil, Comunicação e Educação: questões delicadas na Interface (Braga & Calazans, 2011), Jorge Huergo, Argentina, who wrote Comunicación / Educación: dominios prácticos y perspectivas (Huergo, 2000), Pablo Ramos, Cuba Tres décadas de Educomunicación en América Latina (Ramos, 2000) and Ismar de Oliveira Soares, Brazil, Educommunicação: um campo de mediações (Soares, 2000).

The existence of an autonomous field in the interface was expressly defended by two of these authors: Huergo (the “Communication/Education” field) and Soares (the field of “Educommunication”). ² Carlos Eduardo Valderrama, in the introduction of the book Communication and Education, Coordinates, Approaches and Crossings (2000) is the first one to realize the existence, in the continent, of these discordant points about the nature of the communication-education relationship. The Colombian author stated:

Jorge Huergo (Universidad Nacional de La Plata, Argentina) considers the intersection between communication and education to be a confluence of different theoretical perspectives, social and professional practices with different interests, which can be traversed as a field from three types of relations: institutions teaching and cultural contexts; education and media; and education and new technologies. On the other hand, Ismar de Oliveira Soares (University of São Paulo, Brazil) defends the hypothesis that in fact, it is a new field of knowledge, which is being formed, is autonomous and is in the process of consolidation. It is a field of relational nature, structured as a media process, transdisciplinary and interdiscursive, and materializes in four areas of social intervention: education for the media; technological mediation in education; communication management
in education; and epistemological reexamination. It also supports its hypothesis with the statement that there is already an academic community with well-defined profiles to that defended by the University of São Paulo (USP).

Immediately afterward, the São Paulo University’s Nucleus of Communication and Education used the new paradigm for the management of several big projects, reaching more than 30,000 people all over the country. The practical results allowed the USP to dialogue with authorities about a new approach to improve media education in public sectors. The same university (USP) and another one (Campina Grande, Northeast of the country) started, in 2010, an under-graduation course to train professionals for the field of Educommunication.

13.10 Educommunication: Beyond the 2.0

Roberto Aparici gathered texts produced by Ibero-American leaders in the field, editing a book called Educommunication: beyond the 2.0 (Aparici, 2010). The print material looks like an exhaustive map of what has been said and done about media in relation to education from the 1980s to date. In the introduction, Aparici offers a critical balance about what challenges Educommunication today: the incessant development of digital communication technologies.

According to a note from the scientific Colombian journal Nomadas

without giving up of legacies as important as the Freirians, on the contrary, placing them at the base of his pronouncements, the book exposes progressively the series of tensions, complexities and potentialities which is the digital scenario present, vindicating the relevance of dialogicity, the communion and the meeting in this new communication ecosystem, mainly vehicled by a broad constellation of technologies that put Educommunication facing dimensions never addressed earlier, such as interactivity, immersion, participation or convergence.

(Valenzuela, 2011)

In Brazil, Paulinas Editora begins a print collection on Educommunication, including authors such as Soares, Citelli, Costa, Orozco, Aparici, and Corazza.

13.11 Media Education Networks

Since 2010, a series of initiatives have emerged in the Ibero-American region with the objective of creating opportunities for networking and the development of projects in the area. Some of these groups met together
in a panel during the II International Congress of Communication and Education (São Paulo, November 2018). They are:

– Global Alliance for Partnerships in Media and Information Literacy (GAPMIL) from UNESCO for Latin America and the Caribbean.
– Educommunication network (RedEducom) – Network dealing with Educommunication practice with childhood, based in Quito Ecuador (with the support of SIGNIS – Catholic communication organization in the continent); Salesian sisters – Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians; and the CELAM.
– Euro-American Interuniversity Network of research on media skills for citizenship (ALFAMED in Spanish), with its headquarters at the University of Huelva, Spain.
– Media, Information and Literacy observatory (MilObs) –, headquartered at the University of Minho, Portugal.
– Educom Network sustained by the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, which adopted the Educommunication as a reference for its pedagogical practice, in the five continents.
– Brazilian Association of Researchers and Professionals of Educommunication (ABPEducom), based in São Paulo.

The functioning of these networks proves that media education mobilizes people and organizations. Several of them admit to working expressly with the educommunicative practice, based on commonly agreed references among the participants in each program.

13.12 The Commonly Agreed References

The last five decades brought to Communication and Education interrelationship the finding that the Ibero-American efforts for a social practice, managed by dialogic and participatory communication, had been recognized as an adequate social praxis to share responsibility for projects focused on Media and Information Literacy.

The media education practices resulting from this paradigm has become a specific methodology for improving the right of expression, as a condition for citizenship in everyday life. It includes schools, with children, young people, and teachers. On the other hand, it is a methodology on how to understand the presence of the media (the old and the new) in people’s lives. And, finally, a methodology on how to dialogue about the use of technology to improve relations in favor of our public interests.

What emerged from that practice was a place of being an act, enabling the communities to build an open and democratic ecosystem, in which the analysis of the outside media begins with the study of our very forms and processes of communication.
13.13 Educommunication is Mostly about the Communication Ecosystems

What emerges from the Educommunication practices is a place of being an act, where we can build an open and democratic ecosystem, in which the analysis of the outside media begins with the analysis of the very forms and processes we adopt to our own internal interrelationship.

In this way, when people talk about Educommunication in Latin America they can’t distinguish what is done in a very small classroom from what happens in large territories. In order to illustrate such a particular phenomenon, we should go back to some of the reports showed at the II International Congress of Communication and Education (São Paulo, November 2018), in which participants were able to hear about significant experiences such as:

A – Pásela en paz (Be in peace) in the border of Colombia/Venezuela.
B – Educommunication for sustainability.
C – Educommunication for the new national curriculum on fundamental level.
D – Citizenship generation: educommunication in the kids’ hands.

13.13.1 Pásela en paz (Be in Peace) in the Border of Colombia/Venezuela

The “School radios network” of Arauquita is a radio program done by kids and youth to fight against drugs at the banks of the Arauca River in the border between Colombia and Venezuela. The project generates a space for training and reflection on how to grow up in a cultural environment marked by guerrilla warfare, allowing young people to concretize their projects of life away from weapons, violence and illegality, making possible their dreams of being protagonists of their own stories. The radio productions in schools and communities allow us to establish a commitment to coexistence and peace on the border between two countries involved in the armed conflict. Media analysis and media production function together, involving the lives of kids and youth, professors and parents. It is for live, because after leaving the school the adolescents from Colombia and from Venezuela remain linked to the project, trying to rebuild the relationship among the two countries.<http://www.grupocomunicarte.org/pasela-en-paz.html>

13.13.2 Educommunication for Sustainability

The Educom Network in the state of Bahia in the Northeast of Brazil has been recently structured linked to the Department of Rural Development. It means that the local authorities are acting accordingly
to the Ministry of Environment national policy on how to involve people in the ecosystem preservation: to promote the Environmental Educommunication.

This network is articulated in the context of a public policy called “Bahia Produtiva” (a productive Bahia) financed by the World Bank. This funding made possible the planning and implementation of local training in each of the 27 territories in which this big state was divided to attend a governmental program of sustainability.

In the training process, more than 1,000 leaders were benefited. Among them were the most prestigious local workers, representatives of government and civil society.

It was in the first training session that the concept of Educommunication was presented as a paradigm to guide the activists and politicians involved in environmental preservation. The program includes ongoing assistance to enable people in each of the 27 territories to critically consume media messages in relation to sustainable development and to use media tools to plan and implement collective actions in favor of the welfare and against aggressive behaviors towards the environment. More than 10,000 leaders will be immediately prepared to participate in the proposals of the Educom Network.

13.13.3 Educommunication for the New National Curriculum on a Fundamental Level

The Brazilian federal government has just approved a new national curriculum for elementary schools (NCCB – National Common Curricular Base). The proposal is to ensure that all students in Brazilian schools have access to the same content. The project was strongly opposed by many scholars, taking into account that the official program is most about contents than about a pedagogic project concerned to the student’s real life. Despite these criticisms, a detailed analysis of the project shows that a number of the educommunication’s concerns have been addressed. The government proposal opens spaces for an effective media analysis and for media practices to be promoted. In other words, the project expects future students to be literate in all languages, including the mediatic one. It’s expected also that students should be trained to have an adequate relationship with the communication industry and even should be prepared to use technology to improve their own intellectual and practical progress.

The main problem is the lack of training for teachers and staff support within the educational institutions to understand how this reform can be implemented. To solve it, there must be a training program, which first helps to interpret the rules, and, second, to support them to develop and implement projects in the field. These challenges are growing rapidly. Those challenges are growing rapidly (Soares, 2018).
13.13.4 Citizenship Generation: Educommunication in the Kids’ Hands

A pioneering project in the city of Sao Paulo brought together one educational institution from the private sector and another one from the public education network in Sao Paulo. Students from 11 to 13 years of age participated in the planning and the development of a common project that aimed to promote media analysis and production, engaging students to debate around a theme such as human rights.

They work throughout the year with the academic assistance of ABPEducom. They are always concerned about how they respect each other and how democratic and participatory they can be in all activities. Educommunication allows the dialogue and the improvement of mutual acceptance and solidarity among the adolescents of the two schools who came from different racial, social and economic backgrounds. As a result, together they produced several interviews, documentaries, radio shows, and video productions.

In 2016, the students took an active role in the UNESCO’s V Global MIL Week, celebrated in Sao Paulo. In 2017, the youth presented proposals to the commission in charge of the human rights education plan in the state of Sao Paulo. In addition, in 2018, they defined their commitments to the 17 United Nations goals on sustainable development. A memorable experience lived by the students was the dialogue among them and the North American expert in Media Literacy, Renne Hobbs, in May 2018. Through video production, this project enables dialogues among people interested in Educommunication.

13.14 Media Education and Educommunication: Comparative Studies

The specificities of the concepts of media education and educommunication can be verified through comparative studies, as occurred with the development of current research studies at the University of Sao Paulo (USP). The first one (2012) analyzed a project called “The Other Voices”, implemented in Argentina. From the perspective of the media education paradigms, this project did media analysis and radio productions developed by youth from 400 schools, all over the country. The second one looked at a program developed in the city of Sao Paulo, Brazil, working with teachers and kids from 455 schools, called “Educom.rádio”. The project counted with the collaboration among experts of the University of Sao Paulo. The author, Ana Carolina Altieri Soares, concluded that both programs achieved similar results in which the students showed their commitment to communication as a way of promoting citizenship. On the other hand, one of the differences was that the project in Argentina gave more emphasis to the media analysis and the radio program...
developed by youth within the educational institutions while the project developed in Brazil was more focused on the communication process within the schools, influencing positive changes in the pedagogic practices in the city of São Paulo.

The second substantial research in the field was done by Elisangela Rodrigues Costa (2018). It compared the media education project implemented in Rio de Janeiro by the public schools, with the São Paulo’s Educomradio project. The central objective, in Rio de Janeiro, is the audiovisual language as well as cinema production in the schools. On the other hand, in São Paulo, the activities focus on the democratic communication processes inside the school community itself. The research pointed out some common aspects among the two projects: media analysis and media production. However, in Rio de Janeiro, it is more about audiovisual (film), and in São Paulo, about multimedia production.

### 13.15 Conclusion

The present article tried to summarize – from the author’s perspective and experiences – some of the important landmarks of what happened along the last 50 years in relation to media education practices, in the Region. Unfortunately, most of what happened in Latin America in the field of media literacy was not included in this text. However, just because there are very rich stories to be told, each protagonist in their construction could offer their own contribution to add new perspectives beyond what was written.

It is uplifting to think that the readers will have the opportunity to complement or criticize the content of this article with the other articles present on this book.

Even if not mentioned in this article, it is important to honor the hundreds of leaders in the field who have ensured, on the continent or in their specific countries, the continuity of a 50-year work done by thousands of people in their communities, schools, universities, and public departments.

Regarding those working with the educommunication concept, they are encouraged to document what is currently being done in the field so that the beautiful story of innovation born in Latin America can be understood more clearly and increase its reach to mobilize new generations of media educators and educommunicators, on this continent and in other parts of the world.

### Notes

1. The report of the Las Vetientes meeting, entitled *Educación para la comunicación: manual latinoamericano de educación para los medios de comunicación* (Martin, 1992), could be considered as a preliminary synthesis of what later on NCE-USP (1998) would define as Educommunication.
A functional definition for the concept of Educommunication may include the following terms:

The set of actions inherent in the planning, implementation and evaluation of processes, programs and products intended to create and strengthen communicative ecosystems in educational or virtual spaces, as well as to improve the communicative coefficient of educational actions, including those related to the use of resources in learning processes. It has as its essence the educational intentionality and as a goal the full exercise of the freedom of expression of social actors. Media Education and Media Production in a democratic perspective are part of the edumcomunicational areas of activities.

(Soares, 2002, p. 155)

“Plan Deni” can be considered as edumcomunicative because its methodology included the young people as protagonists in dealing with media criticism and production in a democratic way.

The concept of educommunication became public policy in the city of São Paulo, through a municipal law, after the positive evaluation of a four-year training project that served, between 2001 and 2004, 11,000 people, involving teachers and students of 455 public schools. Today (2018), a set of 750 educommunication projects are implanted in more than 1,000 public schools in the city.

The book has the following configuration: Introduction (Roberto Aparici) and the articles wrote by Daniel Prieto Castillo, Mario Kaplún, Jorge Huergo, Delia Crovi Druetta, Ismar de Oliveira Soares, Agustín García Matilla, Carlos Eduardo Valderrama, Sara Osuna Acedo, Alfonso Gutierrez Martín, Joan Ferrés, José Antonio Gabelas, Carlos Scolari, María Teresa Quiroz and Guillermo Orozco.

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Most high school students use the first link they find when they make online searches (Stanford 2016; ENACOM 2017; IEA 2014). They do not search for a second or third website that would allow them to compare the information or viewpoints. Teenagers use a single website; they do not identify the author or information source and find it difficult to distinguish advertising from information.

A research study by Stanford University found that 82% of the 7,800 students who participated in the study did not know how to distinguish information from sponsored content. For them, there is no difference between journalistic news and articles sponsored by companies or written by the owner of a bank. The study found that American high school students lack the skills to differentiate information sources on the Internet (Stanford University, 2016). When teenagers do not recognize advertising mechanisms and use this material as information, they form their opinion based on publicity rather than on content from trustworthy sources.

Research carried out in 18 countries in different continents revealed that only 2% of high school students know how to differentiate the relevance of a source on the Internet. South Korea, the country with the highest percentage of teenagers with this reflective skill, scarcely reaches 5% (IEA, 2014).

In Argentina, a national survey among 2,000 high school students concluded that only 2 out of 10 teenagers compare different web pages in order to decide which are the most trustworthy. Only 3% chose an Internet site because of its reputation in real life. In other words, just 5% analyse the information’s source – whether by contrasting it with other websites or because they know the author does exist.

The credibility criteria are very poor for more than 90% of the students. According to what they say themselves, they trust and choose a website “because it is the one I always use”, “because I can find the answers for the homework”, “because it helps me”, “because it is well written”, “because it has lots of statistics” or “because it is the first one on Google”. Two out of ten teenagers even admit: “I can’t be sure whether the website is reliable or not, but I use it anyway” (ADIRA, 2017).
Likewise, their arguments are limited when it comes to explaining why they would not trust certain content. In their own words, they say “because the text has spelling mistakes”, “because I found a serious mistake in what it says”, “because it is poorly argued” or “because it shows a lot of opinions”.

Let’s look at another problem involved in the search for content among high school students. The main use of the Internet among teenagers – all around the world – is social media. They mainly use social networks to communicate with their friends, but also to obtain information. High school students – all over the world – are almost exclusively informed by social media. Teenagers get their news from their contacts in social networks, and they immediately share it with their friends. This rapid viralization is due to the high reliability of its contacts, who are rarely questioned. Therefore, the news – including the fake news – they find on social networks is disseminated with much greater speed and credibility.

Let’s look at this new way that young people read news on the social networks in more detail. Most adolescents access information on the web as a secondary practice. That is, they do not enter the Internet with the specific decision to search for news in newspapers, online magazines, blogs or sites that are specifically informative. Teenagers come across news not as a main objective, but rather in an almost casual way, when they surf on social media to communicate with their friends.

In general, they find news in the feeds of their networks, intermingled with funny anecdotes from friends, requests for help and photos of trips, animals and meals. They click on the headlines and spend a short time reading the information beyond the title and the download, then return to Facebook, or stop their media consumption because they have to get off the bus and start walking. This way of consuming news on social networks, as a secondary activity to communicating with friends, is called “incidental”. Access to information ceases to be an independent activity – like when a news site is specifically sought – and becomes part of sociability in networks. This “incidentalization” of news consumption means that the context and hierarchy of journalistic content are lost. What remains are isolated stories and opinions, immersed in a mosaic of information of all kinds and all backgrounds. Here there are no contexts or hierarchies but only fragments (Bocszkowski, Mitchelstein, & Matassi, 2016).

This way of reading of young people is very different from the information consumption practices that existed in the 20th century. Instead of sitting down specifically to read the newspaper or watch news programmes on the television or listen to the radio –like their parents do – most young people find news items casually and unintentionally as part of their constant checking of social media content.

They do not go to the networks to read news, but they find out about the news in an almost fortuitous way with newspaper posts, agencies and their virtual contacts (Bocszkowski et al., 2016).
Why is it a problem this new way of accessing information through social networks? First, the news items that appear on social media only include very limited content, since they usually respond to interests that the users reflect in their browsing, or the concerns of their friends, who generally only share news of interest to them. Obviously, when informed essentially by networks, adolescents perceive and construct a cut-off vision of reality, based on the concerns of their contacts or on what the social network supposes – according to previous searches – may interest them.

On the other hand, the very format of the social network affects and conditions the way they access information. In the networks the information is found out of context. This makes it even more difficult to understand and analyse the content. Messily mixing news of very diverse topics without a logic other than the user’s interests conspires against a good understanding of reality. The incidental reading of news does not favour reflection. This is because, as we said, young people are not interested in it as a main activity, but rather it is subordinated to other concerns. Teenagers are not specifically interested in reading the news, and therefore, they do not usually stop to reflect on its reliability. In short, young people who read the news in the social networks access partial information without any hierarchy, decontextualized from other social events and always as a secondary activity to communications with friends, which is the real reason why they enter their profile.

The second problem of being informed by contacts through social media is that whoever shared the news ends up being more important than the original information source. The criteria of reliability are based on the contact – friends or friends of friends – who spreads the news and not on the author who generated it. Teenagers affirm that, if they received the information from an acquaintance whom they trust, then they believe the information is credible.

An American research study showed that for half of the 1,500 respondents, a piece of news – whose author people ignored – was considered reliable because it had been shared by a friend. It mattered little that they or their friend did not know the original source of the information. The essential thing was that it had been sent by a contact from the social network. They also affirmed that they themselves would share information on the networks if they had previously received it from a friend, a relative or a person they knew. The origin or source of the news had no value when they assessed the credibility of the information, nor did it affect the perception they had of the newspaper article. Even if the original source of the news was known and prestigious, the information was only trusted by those who had received it from a friend (American Press Institute, 2017).

Trusting the contacts of social networks is clearly transferred to trusting information. They are willing to share a story if they received it from
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a friend, even if they do not know the source that produced it and even if it is an author that could not exist. The origin or source of the text can be a fictitious institution or a newspaper that seems real although it is not; however, because they received the content from a friend, it becomes totally reliable. It would only take checking that website with other links to unmask its false identity but, as few adolescents contrast information, the data sent by the friend is quickly consumed and shared. This is precisely the origin and the greatest risk of false news: its rapid diffusion among users of social networks who, because they trust their contacts almost blindly, do not bother to identify the source and share the information without checking the origin.

Precisely because of their friends’ credibility and importance for them, teenagers do not ask about the author who generated the news. It is enough to know who shared it. It is because of this, that they tend to remember more who sent them the information than the source that it originated from. Very few remember the source, because it is less important than the means by which the news reached them: a friend, an acquaintance, a contact in their social network. In the American research, 50 per cent of respondents could remember which of their contacts shared the information, but only two out of ten remembered the author of the newspaper article (Morduchowicz, 2018).

This unique mode of consuming information in social networks of the 21st century is partial, fragmented and incidental. It appears as a casual and secondary effect because, as we saw, adolescents do not enter the networks to obtain information, but rather to communicate with their friends. Furthermore, and no less worrying, when they are informed through social networks, the original sources of information – essential for assessing the reliability of any content – are relegated to the background. Few teenagers wonder about the source of the news item. The origin of the information does not seem to worry high school students. Most of them do not recognize the source from which the content originated. And those who identify the author do not know if they are an authority on the subject or what intention they might have had in producing the information. For teenagers, if a close friend communicated it, it can be shared. Your contacts and not the content’s author are the parameter of credibility.

In summary, the way in which adolescents all over the world search for information on the Internet is very poor. The absence of a critical attitude and reflective skills can make them rely on fake websites; sites without reliable information but with very popular or seductive advertising texts that appeal to emotion. It is precisely for this reason that the reliability of adolescents’ criteria regarding what they find on the web is nowadays a subject of international debate.

That students are limited in their critical thinking about information is certainly not new. But in the 21st century, it is more difficult to
distinguish where the information comes from or to recognize its author. The information without limits that circulates today on the web – as we mentioned before – appears fragmented, disorganized and decontextualized. The overabundance of information disorients adolescents and makes it more difficult for them to select reliable content. The lack of criticality that existed before has now become acute.

We have never before faced the speed with which information circulates today. We are constantly besieged by data, pseudo-data, rumours and gossip that are passed off as information. The danger of information overload is that it directly affects our ability to decide. We may suppose that, in order to choose correctly, we need more and more data; however, at a certain point, more information implies worse decisions. This is because we tend to confuse available information with relevant information (Muro, 2017).

Therefore, although the limited critical attitude towards the information circulating on the Internet is not new, the current overabundance of content increases confusion and generates more difficulties in recognizing the relevance and reliability of the text as well as identifying its author. It becomes more complicated to discover interests and intentions, recognize and compare different points of view, and construct an opinion based on reliable information.

The abundance of information and the possibility of accessing it with such ease as well as the speed of its circulation can generate the risk of “intoxication”, that is, of overabundance and informative noise, as well as personal and collective disorientation (Onrubia, 2016).

Teenagers know who sent them the content through social networks but do not recognize the original author. This complicates choices and decisions. The risk of these limitations lies in the fact that the decisions that students make will be affected by information of doubtful credibility and by their lack of critical thinking. When they only use the first page they find on the Internet, they do not ask themselves why that link is first in the search engine or whether it is truly a reference to the subject. They therefore limit their understanding of the social fact and reduce their vision to only the point of view that the author of the website reflects.

Differentiating the relevance of content and identifying the reliability of a source are the two most important challenges for students so that they make a reflective and critical use of the information they find on the web. High school students need to learn that neutrality does not exist on the Internet. It is essential that they ask themselves why a certain website and not another tops the list of links in the search engine. They need to learn not to restrict their search to a single page. They will understand that, more than being navigation platforms, search engines select and prioritize information based on certain interests and intentions, and through these mechanisms affect the way we perceive and understand reality.
The rapid viralization of “fake news” on social networks led Facebook to develop algorithms to detect false news, as it does so today with racism, hate speech, paedophilia and pornography. Although these algorithms are effective to a degree, it is clear that they are insufficient. Using an algorithm as the solution to the lack of critical skills in teenagers cannot be the only answer. We must add other strategies to strengthen young people’s reflective thinking regarding the information on the Internet. We are talking about a new literacy that trains students in identifying informative relevance and reliability on the web.

In the 15th century the printing press allowed information that until then had been owned exclusively by an elite, to reach the entire society. This was precisely the origin of the school: an institution that was in charge of teaching the population how to read and of distributing information for all. Six centuries after Gutenberg the distribution of information is not enough. Today, students have the possibility to access the content they want in a few seconds, anytime and anywhere. The challenge in the 21st century is the quality of this access. In other words, the goal of the 21st century is to teach how to use information reflectively. The accumulation of information by information in itself is not enough. On the contrary, it can saturate, disorient, confuse and make decisions more difficult to take. Today, the objective is to teach teenagers how to search for information in the infinite library that is the web, how to process and organize it, how to analyse it, what criteria to use to assess its reliability and how to use it to build a personal opinion and participate in the community.

These reflective skills, essential for the society of knowledge proposed by the 21st century, are part of “informational literacy”. Informational literacy aims to teach how to distinguish the relevance and reliability of the information that circulates in the media and the Internet. It is based on three essential dimensions: free access to information, a reflective attitude towards it and a creative use to generate new contents. The challenge – UNESCO explains – is to assess the relevance and reliability of information without citizens having any obstacle to making use of their rights to freedom of expression and information. It is in this context that the need for Media and Information Literacy is conceived. (UNESCO, 2011)

In the 21st century, it is clear that being “literate to continue in the school circuit” does not guarantee being literate for civic life. It is not possible to continue betting on democracy without making the necessary efforts to increase the number of readers (full readers, not decipherers). Nowadays, the social and working requirements are much higher and more demanding. Internet surfers are drifting boats if they do not know how to make quick decisions and select information (Ferreiro, 2004).
In the 21st century, literacy cannot be defined only by the literal reading and writing of texts. Today new languages have emerged; new skills are required to face new demands. In the 21st century, high school students need to have skills that seem even more urgent than in the last century. They need to know how to search for information, select it, process it, analyse it, evaluate it, make decisions, create new contents and communicate them.

The European Union, the region of the world with most experience in literacy development, proposes that its member countries promote the ability to critically analyse information in the new generations, so that they can make informed choices and decisions based on a reflective attitude of what they find on the web. The European Union defines this literacy as a fundamental pillar for building a democratic and participatory citizenship (European Council, 2008).

As we said previously, teenagers must be able to use critical thinking to evaluate the relevance and reliability of information. This competence becomes essential in the digital age due to the abundance of information that, as we explained, makes it difficult to determine the authenticity of the sources that originated the information. The constant flow of information makes it complicated to distinguish what is reliable and what has been invented. Information literacy empowers new generations because if they learn to evaluate informative reliability, they will also learn to make decisions based on reliable and well-founded information. A democratic society can only exist if its members not only access information, but also know how to read it, interpret it and use it.

Informational literacy and its competencies do not seem to be a priority for public policies around the world. Few countries have incorporated and legitimized it as a specific topic in initial teacher training, continuous training or the school curriculum. In recent years, state programmes have been launched all over the world to provide students with technology. The provision of screens – netbooks, notebooks and tablets – to all students has been very important because it has promoted a more democratic and equitable access to technology, especially among those who come from the poorest families and therefore have no other possibility of accessing technology. However, public policies, for the most part, have been focussed on access. The provision of technology, although essential, is not enough. This access opens new questions. New challenges emerge that the supplying of technology can no longer solve. The digital gaps today can not only be solved with connectivity. Now that the access to technology and information is available for students from different social contexts, the new challenge is centred in practices and uses: high school students need to learn how to make a reflective and creative use of technology and information.

It is utopic to believe that unlimited access to technology and information without the skills to be able to use them effectively is enough.
Towards a New Literacy Concept

If young people do not have the fundamental competence of learning to learn and search, engines and browsers become insurmountable walls (Wolton, 2000).

Knowing how to make critical use information requires young people to develop critical thinking skills towards what they read, listen to and see. They need to learn how to look for information in the web, how to solve problems, make decisions, construct their own opinions, communicate and share them with others. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Boston promotes these skills by emphasizing the need for the three Cs: competencies, content and connectivity. MIT places competencies as first priority. Connectivity ranks third and equipment does not even figure. The key today are competencies, uses and practices. Only if students acquire the necessary skills to make a reflexive use of technology, will the digital gaps be closed.

Now, what specific content does this education include? Where should we start to create a literacy programme that promotes the informational competences high school students need in this new century? There are five fundamental areas that must be included in this training. Let’s look at each of them carefully (Morduchowicz, 2018).

First of all, teenagers will learn that the Internet is not neutral. They need to understand the principle of “no transparency”: nothing is transparent on the web. They will experiment the importance of always having plural information, which comes from a variety – and different – of sources and points of view. They need to discover why listening to a single voice limits the understanding of reality and the construction of an independent and reflexive opinion.

It is important to get rid of the autism of a reader engaged in one single text. Being a responsible reader today goes through the plural and branched enquiries we make in the various scenarios and circuits where knowledge is presented and circulated (García Canclini, 2015).

Differentiating informative content of other genres and texts – such as advertising, sponsored content or opinion – is the second concept students need to understand. They must learn to distinguish genres in the various discourses that circulate in the web, because each discourse reflects a different intention according to different interests. Only by identifying these differences, students will learn that it is not possible to take an advertisement as if it were information; or to read sponsored content as if it were a story; or consider an opinion article or an editorial as if it were a news story. They are different genres, with different intentions, that require different readings and different uses.

The third component of this literacy programme involves teaching students the concepts of relevance and reliability. In order to decide on the reliability of a text, students need to learn to identify the source of the information: who produced it originally (and not, who sent it to them or how it came to them). The identity of the author defines the
reliability of the content and, like the genre, also reflects intentions. To assess the intentionality of each piece of information, students need to identify the source that it originated from better. Students should also be able to analyze the place occupied by the website: why does one link come first? And why another one, even if it comes from a reliable source, is shown in the last place?

The fourth component of this training proposes to teach teenagers the logic of the media and informative webpages in the construction of news. The concepts of representation, readings and perspectives are the main axes of this fourth component. They can therefore understand why the news is not a transparent mirror of the facts, but readings and views that each medium makes from its editorial line.

The fifth component is creativity and production on the Internet. This aims to teach students to generate new productions and participate socially through the expression of their own voice. This component seeks to promote the ability of students to work in teams and collaboratively; to promote their problem-solving skills; to interact in constructive dialogues with others; to contrast personal opinions with those of others; to debate and reach conclusions that represent other’s point of views; to build new content and to share it with others in blogs, web pages, social networks or forums. These are social competences that prepare adolescents for a participatory culture. This dimension cannot be missing from an informational literacy programme that requires informed and reflective teenagers, who at the same time have a voice of their own and exercise their right to participate.

In short, this training includes essential contents: neutrality, transparency, relevance, reliability, genre differentiation, determining the origin of information, intentions and interests, and logics that govern the production and communication of contents. This literacy will allow students to use the information they find on the Internet in a reflective, critical and creative way.

In the 21st century, the school no longer has the monopoly on information and its function. Precisely because of this, it cannot be the same as it was until the 19th century, when its main objective was the distribution of information. The concern today cannot be access to information, which is a click away from the students, but rather the quality of this access. The goal for the school is to strengthen the students’ ability to search, process, evaluate and use the information available from the web. In other words, the challenge in the 21st century is to qualify the demand, that is, to teach students how to make reflective searches that allow them to obtain the best quality of information.

The school needs to teach students the place information has in their lives. It also needs to make them understand how it affects their perception of the world, how to make a critical use of it, and how to demand the best quality of information that will allow them to make better decisions.
These competences are of crucial importance. They are linked to the
democratic continuity of a society. Information – as explained in this
chapter – is not enough. A citizen committed to democracy is the one
who knows how to read this information: analyse, process, compare,
question, evaluate, decide and participate.

Therefore, although it is fundamental, democratic continuity is not
enough to guarantee the reproduction of a democratic political culture
from generation to generation. Without information linked to critical
thinking, without an informed opinion, and without social participa-
tion, democracy is always incomplete.

We need a new concept for literacy: an informational literacy for the
21st century.

Note

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15 Constructivist TV reception in the children’s classroom

Valerio Fuenzalida

15.1 Introduction

We begin by looking at the relationship between education and television communication, which enjoyed a boom in Latin America during the 1980s. Four Latin American seminars were held on the subject over a period of about ten years: in 1985, the first meeting was held in Santiago (Chile), the second in Curitiba (Brazil) in 1986, the third in Buenos Aires in 1988, and the last, again in Santiago, in 1991; a substantial amount of training material was developed in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Uruguay and Venezuela, among others; this was complemented by analysis and theoretical debate on the social impact of TV (Fuenzalida & Hermosilla, 1991).

15.2 From Critical Viewing to Active Viewing

In the first few decades following its introduction, TV was predominantly perceived as an all-powerful force before a passive audience; in the context from which it emerged, TV was regarded as a cultural, moral and political threat. Such perceptions were fostered in some theories such as behaviourism and those from the Frankfurt School, but also among social sectors that saw TV as a driving force for consumerism and a destroyer of values; North American religious fundamentalism also considered television to be a major threat to Puritan values, especially in regard to sexual morality. In Latin America, several military dictatorships seized control of TV channels (for instance in Peru, Argentina and Chile), while other dictatorships formed alliances with private television stations; across the continent, the fear was widely shared that TV had a considerable political-ideological influence in perpetuating dictatorships. The critical viewer had to adopt a rational-analytical attitude towards their TV consumption and acknowledge the threats it posed. The pleasure derived from watching a television programme was considered deceptive.

15.2.1 Changes in TV Comprehension

The developments that led to the idea of “active viewing” stemmed from several changes in the conception of TV and its audience.
1.1.1. One of the first changes was to conceive TV cultural influence within social life. The emergence of new sexual behaviours not only related to TV but was also associated with the introduction of the contraceptive pill in the 1960s and the rise of feminist movements. As a result of these developments, audiovisual representations of the body greatly intensified, cultural awareness of corporeality and eroticism was cast in a new light, and anthropological notions of corporeality, eroticism and pleasure were re-imagined. The re-evaluation of democracy was linked to the political-academic crisis that surrounded the concept of “dictatorship of the proletariat” and the fall of “real socialism” symbolized by the destruction of the Berlin Wall in 1989. The Illuminist conception of public space as the only place for psychological and historical realization was undermined, while subjective and private aspects of everyday life at home and interpersonal family relationships acquired new meanings. A century after the development of steam power associated with industrial revolution (1775), Edison invented the electric energy also connected to home use, which was soon followed by domestic development of telephone, radio and phonograph. After the Second World War, the massive production of household equipment led to improvements in the quality of life by making domestic chores easier. Subsequent advances in electronic equipment have increasingly transformed home into a centre of entertainment; the arrival of the digital age has brought with it broadband internet connectivity, effectively fitting out the home so that it has become too a potential working environment. The consumption of goods is tied to the vindication of the private home as environment for subjective pleasure; through advertising, fictional programmes and lifestyle channels, the household environment has been legitimated. Religion and moral frameworks have become subject to secular forces, with increasing demands for personal autonomy and new forms of spirituality. It follows then that TV does not have an all-powerful influence on isolated and vulnerable individual as the behaviourists had argued. Rather, it is intermingled with the family culture and social life.

1.1.2. A second change came with the recognition of the home as the setting for TV viewing, especially in the age prior to the introduction of digital technology (Fuenzalida, 2002, 2005). The establishment of the home/family as the cultural centre for TV reception (both open and paid) prompted the search for appropriate techniques to gain a better understanding of this context. The concept of “viewing context” saw family as a socio-cultural unit of reception and dethroned the behaviourist idea of individual and isolated reception. From a methodological point of view, it set a course towards ethnographic research techniques (including participant observation, in-depth interviews and consumption logs) that sought to integrate the observation of everyday media consumption at home with meaningful utterances by the viewers in these situations. The methodology of data collection on audience interpretation in situ
differed from the speculative analyses of university academics, and also from the laboratory techniques used by behaviourists, who sought to isolate the viewer from his or her family-cultural situation.

The results of ethnographic observation of household TV consumption have shown television viewing to be integrated within the spatio-temporal continuum of daily family life; unlike viewing in other spaces, in which daily life cedes to a different spatio-temporal experience comprising its own rules, such as the cinema, theatre, concert halls, sports fields, classroom, library, place of work, etc. The ethnography of TV viewing at home reveals a noisy, conversational viewing environment, and more recently, a multitasking one, with several screens; the nature of reception marks a stark contrast to that obtained from behaviourist laboratory techniques, in which precisely these everyday situational conditions were removed, as they were perceived to be “interfering with the stimulus”. The home emerges – not as a closed and culturally isolated unit – but as one that is open to multiple social-medial influences: in fact, research shows audience having an important “TV capital”, acquired both inside and outside the home. TV programmes are interpreted from the media intertextuality acquired by audiences (and the intertextual mixing of different multi-media platforms), refuting the characterization of the viewer as isolated and devoid of media culture. The pragmatics of familiar interaction also describe how television viewing is inserted into the various daily routines of household members and how it is related to the moods and emotions accompanying these activities; it has been noted that the pace of audience activities and the level of emotions – interacting with the interest evoked by certain messages – modulate the multiplicity of possible attention levels to the screen (TV as background noise, monitory, full concentration, as a peripheral activity, attention to several screens, etc.). These findings undermine the idea of “hypnotic attention” towards the screen and debunk the theory of “flow”, which suggests that the screen captivates audiences without allowing them to distinguish between TV genres and content or a distinctive enjoyment.

The research has also revealed some television broadcasts to have a major bearing on the ability to foster family conversation, such as news and fictional programmes, i.e., their impact is neither linear nor deterministic, but mediated by inter-family dialogue, and such a trait is more characteristic of Latin American families, which tend to be more socially engaged. Multiplatforms encourage conversations to extend to connectivist networks and nodes, allowing for comments, fan clubs, derogations, teasing and other reactions (bullying).

1.1.3. A third change is a new positive understanding of TV entertainment concept. According to ethnographic research on television viewing, for students and workers returning home, as well as housewives in certain moments of daily life, home is perceived as a spatial-temporal, cultural-psychological, restorative environment; distinct from the
spatio-temporal environment of tasks and obligations associated with the laws of performance, with their reward or penalty: activities linked to the spatio-temporal context of work and study. This subjective expectation of household audiences has an objective correlation in the double rhythm of psychosomatic biochemistry; moving from a performance environment to one of rest is accompanied by a biochemical corporal response of the autonomic parasympathetic nervous system; this inhibits the secretion of adrenaline and other neurotransmitters appropriate to the attentiveness and stress associated with performance-related activities, and it produces endorphins and serotonin, neurotransmitters fitted to psycho-cultural contexts of rest and relaxation. Accordingly, the audience integrates TV viewing at home with a psychosomatic expectation of rest, relaxation and entertainment. Although new communication technologies are becoming increasingly portable, so that entertainment (and leisure) reception is ever more ubiquitous, since the final half of the 20th century, home has been transformed into a cultural space equipped with technologies and highly appreciated as a situation of affective value and reward.

1.1.4. A fourth change is the new concept of existential educational expectation, discovered through the ethnographic research of television viewing within the Latin American home: educational-cultural expectation, highly pronounced in popular sectors on the media; these expectations are not related to the formal schooling of children, nor to the systematic training of young people and adults – an instructive role which is considered inherent to the school and other educational agencies; the existential educational expectation, in contrast, is associated with learning directed at the resolution of problems, deficiencies and adversities that affect everyday life at home (Fuenzalida, 2005). It is against this existential backdrop that audience testimonials can be understood regarding educational attainment from across different TV genres; an interpretation that has been widely documented over the last 20 years in Latin America (Fuenzalida, 2007, 2008b).

1.1.5. A fifth change, is that research on television viewing dissolves the traditional synonymy: television education = formal schooling; the audience expectation of learning via TV has two differences in relation to the school agency: first, the most valued contents concern existential situations and issues related to everyday life; second, this learning occurs from within the spatio-temporal context of entertainment viewing at home, especially by way of emotional identification with anecdotal stories and personal experiences as opposed to conceptual reasoning acquired from general and abstract laws; unlike school education and professional training, these educational expectations are interwoven with televised forms of entertainment rather than conceptual reasoning obtained from general abstraction.

From a television-viewing perspective, entertainment appears as a complex attitudinal feeling opposed to boredom, disinterest and
non-involvement. The sense of entertainment, therefore, neither opposes, nor contradicts education and learning, i.e., it does not negate cognition and behavioural attitudes. Ethnographic studies have shown that Latin American audiences have a pleasing regard for issues of daily social life; moreover, soap operas and docudramas provide fictional contexts from which to talk socially about themselves. It follows that entertainment, from within the fictional-playful spatio-temporal context, can afford cognitive reflection. These changes have led to the introduction of the new concept of “Edutainment” and a re-imagining of entertainment and pleasure, undermining the traditional Calvinist-rationalist conceptualization of entertainment as an unproductive form of life evasion, a source of sinful and even alienating pleasure. In Spain, Joan Ferrés (2001, 2008) has also stressed the pleasurable aspects of television viewing. He points out that the defensive rationalist and anti-pleasure view contradicts the existential sense of delight experienced by TV audiences at home, especially among children and adolescents.

Taken together, these changes demonstrate the need for a new conceptualization of TV, according to which the medium ceases to be seen as a malevolent and omnipotent agency, perpetrating evil against defenceless children and audiences in general. From Europe, David Buckingham (2005) has been a driving force behind a less condemnatory standpoint and accepts that television can and must be a cultural opportunity; the objective of education for television viewing therefore ceases to be defensive (educating the critical viewer to defend him or herself against the TV threat) and that active viewing can indeed constitute a social, pleasing and enriching experience. In Latin America, this conceptual shift became known as Recepción Activa (Active Reception), in preference to the expression lectura crítica or recepción crítica (reading or critical reception) on account of the latter’s defensive connotations.

15.2.2 The Concept of Active Reception

The conceptualization of Active reception/viewing was fuelled by various discussions first arising to Umberto Eco’s Opera Aperta (The Open Work) (2000) published in 1962, then to the theory of the “live text” made fluid by the act of reading (Barthes, 1987), and finally to more radical notions proposed by Stanley Fish (1982) concerning the autonomy of both text and reader. According to Fish, meaning lies neither in the text, nor with the author intention, but is produced by the reader; the “death of the author” as asserted by Barthes has even led to the disappearance of the text.

As a result of these influences, the receiver/viewer has been conceptualized as an active interpreter of audio-visual texts. Audiences interact with programmes, interpreting and assigning meanings, not only from their medial intertextuality but also from a socio-familiar culture with its own preferences and interests.
Active viewing of audiovisual media has several features:

- It assumes the *polysemic* character of audiovisual texts as a textual basis for viewer interaction.
- It assumes viewers engage in *intertextual interpretation and give meaning to* audiovisual texts.
- Accordingly, there is not a single “correct reading” that should be taught that derives from an academic, semiotic, ideological, political or aesthetic truth.
- It assumes the characteristics and potential of *visual language* to be inherently different from those of language through reading and writing.
- It assumes that the language is specified in different *audiovisual genres*, each with differing characteristics and relationships toward diverse audiences (*reading contract*).
- It values *playful and emotional processes* in audience relationships with texts.
- It accepts the diversified audience *experience* of entertainment (or boredom), which induces a sense of pleasure (versus displeasure) and delight among TV viewers.
- It involves *hybridization*, both with genres inter-textually and in terms of viewing processes, giving rise to “edutainment” and “info-tainment” programmes.
- The concept of audiovisual quality has shifted away from academic norms or from those imposed by cultural hegemony and is diversified according to gender and the plurality of cultural capital that mediates television viewing.

15.3 Constructivist Reception

The first tier in constructivist theories of human perception consists of *psychobiological mechanisms*, investigated by Gestalt psychologists from the 1930s (Kanizsa, 1986; Köhler, 1972). Their studies showed that human visual perception is governed by constructivist rules inherent to the species. These are very different from the mathematical formulas relating to the “perception” of camera lenses used in photography and other audiovisual applications. Constructivism has been supported by recent advances in cognitive neurobiology:

> The brain is a creative system. Rather than mirroring the environment around it, as an engineered information-processing device would, each brain constructs maps of that environment using its own parameters and internal design, and thus creates a world unique to the class of brains comparatively designed.

(Damasio, 2000, p. 350; cfr. 40)
To the first bio-structural tier to the constructivist theory in human perception, it is necessary to add a **second tier of semiotic-cultural constructivism**. Semiotics has shown polysemy as an inherent quality of signs and as the textual basis for audience interpretation; several studies on television reception have demonstrated the various interpretations of programmes, according to the cultural intertextual capital of audiences (from the most basic interpretation of being bored or entertained by a particular programme). The cognitive psychologist Francisco Varela adds that, more than being a cognitive-renderer of “reality”, the brain is a perceiver-organizer of pragmatic action for the task of living in the world (Varela, Thompson, & Rosch, 1997); perception has a pragmatic value for the subject’s survival. Varela has also noted the existence of files in the brain that store the information that then interacts with the data drawn from external perception; final perception consists of an interaction between information coming from outside and the information filed internally (Varela & Petitot, 2001).

Behaviourism, which was predominant in social sciences during much of the 20th century, in contrast, viewed the human mind as an empty, blank recorder (“tabula rasa”) at birth; this concept originated in previous philosophical theories about the human being, but was formulated at a time when knowledge about the human brain was very limited; technology was not available at the time to enable a proper understanding of the inner operations of the live human brain. According to behaviourism, learning occurred by establishing an association between an external stimulus and the subject via an elicited response, which is then judged to be correct by the stimulator; the competences, motivations and internal mechanisms associated with learning were unknown.

By using brain imaging techniques, advances in cognitive neurobiology showed the child to be endowed with active capacities and internal motivations; according to this new conceptualization, children’s learning consists of developing such capabilities and internal skills (Lavados, 2012a, 2012b). Research on child development in evolutionary psychology also points to the child’s internal capacity to develop in temporal phases, as shown by Freud, Piaget and Erikson’s epigenetic theory (Papalia, 2005). It also underscores the fact that, for the child to develop these internal competencies, they must be stimulated and actively engaged by the family-cultural environment (Céspedes, 2007).

Cognitive neurobiology provides an important scientific basis for the active viewer concept, given the potential for brain imaging techniques to demonstrate internal capabilities in the recipient subject. But it also emphasizes the need for a stimulating socio-cultural environment to ensure the child is able to develop these internal capacities appropriately.
Epistemologically, behaviourism has clashed with brain neuroscience and cognitive psychology. Perhaps the best-known controversy surrounded Chomsky’s statement (1975) regarding children’s innate capacity to acquire human language and its syntactic structures. Chomsky discredited the experiments (costing millions of dollars) to teach the oral human language to monkeys, arguing that they have no need for internal capacities, as language learning results from a behaviourist stimulus that is external to the animal.

15.3.1 Constructivist TV Viewing

From the standpoint of viewing TV programmes, there is evidence that television cannot be imagined in a one-to-one relationship with the viewer, who is isolated from the family and cultural environment, and whose educational benefit would primarily hinge on the programme itself, as was conceived by behaviourism in the 20th century. The educational appropriation of these programmes requires interaction with a significant environment (Fuenzalida, 2008a), hence the importance of constructivist viewing in the classroom and at home. New TV programmes must be designed (a) to emphasize a connection with children’s internal competences and (b) to be broadcast in a stimulating and constructivist environment.

These new programmes are necessary but not sufficient to ensure an educational value for children (Nathanson et al., 2013). Interpreting meaning is complex because of the polysemy of words and the multiple layers of meaning: from the more superficial aspects of the narrative anecdote to deeper, more implicit levels; the child viewer’s interpretative creativity must also be given space for expression, hence the need for a cultural constructivist viewing environment, which interacts with the child’s personal interpretations of the programme. From a theoretical point of view, the behaviourist notion of a solitary viewer, isolated from the socio-cultural environment and subject to the programme’s autonomous influence, is abandoned in favour of a constructivist approach, in which the child’s ludic expression and interaction from his/her socio-cultural environment are necessary for educational value to be achieved (Fuenzalida, 2016; Figure 15.1).

These shifts in the conceptualization of children’s TV pave the way for a new stage in education for television communication: a constructivist model of reception, especially for young children. The aim of education for TV today would be to implement a constructivist model of reception for children’s TV programmes, to encourage interaction of their own socio-emotional skills with skills as represented in a programme. This implies the challenging task of generating enjoyable and constructivist exposure/viewing environments for young children. From a practical point of view, this model of constructivist reception should be provided in nursery schools and at home.
There are several reasons for the need to strengthen constructivist viewing in preschool education.

3.1. First of all, children are major consumers of TV. Currently, pay TV in the Latin American region offers between 10 and 12 children's channels. The average penetration of pay TV in Latin America households is around 50%. Data sourced from the Brazilian Institute of Public Opinion and Statistics (IBOPE) for the Latin American region shows that children's channels occupy the first four or five positions in the top ten pay TV channels. Towards the end of the preschool stage, children increasingly become “multitaskers” across the various available platforms.

3.2. Dussaillant and González (2012) show that nursery school education is more likely to lead to better performance at subsequent school levels. Investment in the development of nursery education as regards coverage and quality has been shown to be more socially effective in people’s educational processes. Social effectiveness is cause for seizing the opportunity to improve the quality of preschool education.

3.3. Besides this, the concept of quality in nursery school education has extended towards a more comprehensive development of the child; this includes so-called “social-emotional intelligence”, which refers to self-awareness and social consciousness, emotional insight, positive self-image, responsibility for decision-making, resilience and a sense of capacity for implementation, self-control and social relations. Yet development of these competencies has been neglected in the early stages.
of childhood, with too much emphasis being placed on preparation for the later school stages ("hyper schooling"). Today, these aspects of early child learning are considered fundamental to personal, social and citizen development, as well as for subsequent schooling (Milicic & López de Lérida, 2012).

The quality of nursery school education with the development of the young child’s socio-emotional intelligence can be supported by new generation children’s TV programmes. When a new constructivist model of children’s TV viewing is introduced in the preschool classroom, a new opportunity emerges: to increase the quality of nursery-school education, as a basis for subsequent learning.

The changes in children’s TV programmes (Fuenzalida, 2016) push the need for a constructivist model of reception in education for television communication, especially during childhood. Within this model, television is not considered a threat to the child, nor is the child regarded as a solitary being who must be protected from the malevolent influence of TV. Constructivist viewing of a new generation of programmes in the classroom and in the home is intended to establish a productive and ludic interaction between the capabilities of the child audience, with the competent child portrayed on TV.

15.5 New Tasks at the Nursery School Stage

Constructivist reception poses new educational tasks for television communication at the nursery school stage:

15.5.1 Building a Constructivist Reception Strategy for the Classroom

Work has been carried out involving three viewing sessions of the same programme: a weekly viewing of the same episode of the same series, but with each having a different focus:

- **On the First viewing**, the aim is to stimulate children’s enjoyment of the episode, encouraging them to engage with the programme’s intended interactive content. From a cognitive point of view, the aim here is to help the children understand the narrative sequence in terms of the goal achieved or task performed in the narrated story.
- **On the Second viewing**, the goal is to help the children identify and understand the characteristics of the fictional characters as well as their skills and abilities.
- **On the Third viewing**, the objective is to compare the competences/capabilities of the fictional characters with those of the audience and to inspire child audiences to acquire these skills for themselves. This is the deepest layer of interpretation.
After each viewing, in the second part of each session, the teacher proposes **constructivist activities to children**, so they are able to appropriate the objectives of each of the three viewings. Activities include exchanging expressive childish pleasure; drawing as a form of personal expression; role-playing; group and open-class commentary; encouraging exchange between children and their parents at home about the viewed programmes.

15.5.2 Opening Up Access to Nursery School TV in the Classroom

It presupposes the training of existing nursery school teachers and the systematic training of new ones in constructivist pedagogy.

15.5.3 Training Parents of Children from the Nursery School Classroom

The challenge lies in training the family in constructivist teaching-learning methodologies with the children. If parents do not talk to their children about the programmes, this parental silence carries an implicit message: “Your viewing of television programmes is of no interest to us because it there is no value or importance in it, neither for you nor for your parents”, even if the child should find the activity interesting, enjoyable and potentially beneficial. Deliberate and constructive mediation is therefore required.

In the past, the focus has been on the “co-viewing” of parents with their children. These days, parents have very little time to sit and watch TV with their children, and they do not have the confidence to talk about the programmes they see. The preschool classroom can help train parents to become familiar with some of the children’s favourite TV programmes, appreciate the values and attitudes they portray, and provide a constructivist viewing context in which to exchange interpretations with their children. Regular meetings of parents with nursery school teachers from each course could devote some time to highlighting the values of watching certain programmes and encouraging parents to talk about them with their children. Discussing interpretations of stories is one constructivist approach that facilitates interaction, making explicit certain interpretations and contents that the viewing child considers valuable. It is not about teachers or parents providing a “correct” interpretation; rather the conversation is a demonstration that parents attach great importance towards their children’s understanding of the programmes, as well as the value of their playful enjoyment and interpretation.

Such an approach, which consists of constructivist discussions between teachers and parents within the school to help them play a more active role in their children’s TV viewing experience, acknowledges the
entertainment value and viewer pleasure within a relaxing home environment. But training is required to inform teachers and parents of the programmes being broadcast and their educational potential.

15.5.4 Training of Children’s TV Producers and Programmers

TV channel programmers need training to identify the new criteria associated with high-quality children’s TV. Similarly, specialized professionals working on the design and scripting of children’s programmes must be familiar with the latest quality standards in children’s TV production. Furthermore, they must be made explicit to ensure the allocation of public funds for those interested in creating children’s TV.

15.5.5 Public Policies for Screening Children’s TV in the Nursery School Classroom

The introduction of children’s TV in the nursery school classroom necessitates Communicational-political decisions on behalf of public and municipal establishments. Today, several municipalities have their own cable TV channels, and the lower costs of Video on Demand are making access increasingly feasible; these technological advances in broadcast/viewing conditions facilitate their introduction into nursery school classrooms.

Summary

Communication for television education has evolved from maintaining a defensive position against the supposedly pernicious effects of TV programming towards an appreciation of TV shown/viewed in a constructivist way as edutainment for developing competences in children. Efforts are being made to produce “Edutainment” directed at emotional intelligence. Preschool education offers a valuable opportunity for adopting a constructivist model of TV reception in the classroom. The notion of ludic entertainment has been re-envisaged to include educational contents with an affective-motivational dimension. Attitudinally, affective learning has been re-evaluated by an anthropology that is more sensitive to the development of social and emotional human potential.

New TV productions together with a constructivist reception model re-conceptualize TV education and its positive socio-emotional value. Also called for is their systematic introduction in the nursery and basic school classroom; through the enjoyment derived from these productions as well as their own personal experience, children would learn to distinguish between educationally entertaining quality programmes. For older age groups, smaller equipment and lower costs provide an opportunity
for students to produce and explore, together with their teachers, areas of social and cultural importance; to discuss productions and viewing experiences, thus facilitating more constructivist reflection with greater practical application for everyday life.

The home’s centrality – as a place for rest and pleasure – leads us to conclude that school activity is not enough, and that the family must be trained to engage in interpretative activity at home.

References

16 Media literacy in contemporary learning-based societies
Challenges for new ways of education

Guillermo Orozco Gómez and José Manuel Corona Rodríguez

16.1 What We Are Experiencing Today Is “a Great Change of Era” Rather than an Era of Great Changes

From the perspective of communication, “the great change of era” in education consists in the fact that the educational axis does not reside in teaching anymore but in learning, and the latter is taking place in processes of communicational exchange.

Twenty-first century societies are “education societies” because education depends not only on educational institutions but also on exchanges among all the people with information and knowledge, as Martín-Barbero (2003) holds. Education is being carried out everywhere and at any moment. Education has left the classrooms and is being attained by many more actors, media and instruments, and less frequently by the traditional teachers, blackboards and text books.

Contemporary education is carried out almost in any setting where the possibility of learning becomes a reality without anybody who teaches, without a syllabus or clear learning objectives, let alone with the possibility of obtaining any certificates that prove the learning attained. What is really essential to learn is the communicative and information exchange processes with the rest and with the different screens and technological devices. This does not mean, though, that all education turns around instruments, not at all, no matter how “smart” these instruments are.

To claim that information technologies and the multiple screens play a leading role as educational sources and interlocutors does not entail forgetting about face-to-face personal processes, between two or more people that establish a dialogue and seek to reach agreements, conclusions and learning. Live dialogue is and will always be crucial, just as Paulo Freire (1968) claimed, even from learning processes derived from technologies and screens (Corona Rodríguez, 2018a).

But removing the educational axis from its traditional setting – the school and its classic facilitator – the teacher, and its relocation in the student subjects themselves, has eroded one of the greatest certainties of
modernity and one of the greatest points of confluence and agreement between an “Educator” State, whose main goal has always been to ensure literacy for all and to tend to universal basic education, and a supposed literate citizenry, who is less and less “instructed” and more and more deprived of school certificates and, above all, of minimal conditions that ensure their productive inclusion in the contemporary labor market. A citizenry, nonetheless, is ever more capable of obtaining, though always in a differentiated manner and in accordance with socioeconomic strata and political systems of belonging, survival methods from their informal, occasional or unforeseen learning. These methods of learning are, however, unequal from one another, but they are not usually recognized formally by the educational system, save for a few exceptions in some remedial study programs, in which individual “experience” has some value for professional curriculums.

In addition, the traditional belief that the more formal education that is certified with diplomas and degrees, the greatest the chances the citizens have of getting a job has long vanished, on corroborating in the first place that the classic rule between education and market: the higher the school certificate and the more years of formal schooling, the higher the salary and the better the job, has been overshadowed by other types of skills, contacts, employment policies and market needs that the traditional school, save some exceptions, was not capable of providing. Among others, it is precisely communicational and analytical skills, such as formulating thoughts in writing or interpreting or summarizing instructions or description of procedures; or leadership capacities, initiative and creativity, the capacity for prospective thought, for strategic planning, and the like, that are today demanded in many jobs and these skills ultimately decide who is hired for these positions to a large extent. These capacities are not usually developed in the classrooms; rather, they are gradually obtained spontaneously and in a ludic manner, precisely outside the school environment: for example, while playing video games (Orozco, 2001).

Secondly, the present school system is far from attaining their own objectives, since it does not provide good quality education, which is all the more noticeable in asymmetrically developed countries such as Mexico and other Latin-American nations, which causes graduates to always be relearning basic stuff and seeking to obtain in other places and at different times the knowledge and skills that they failed to get when they were in the classrooms.

16.2 The Never-Ending Crisis and the Expansion of the Information Society

Speaking of a crisis in education is a way of recognizing that the school system has not been capable of keeping up with the needs and transformations of the new knowledge scenarios, given the dizzying advent of
the technological and cultural convergence that has occurred in the last few decades (Gee, 2013; Siemens, 2007). There should be no doubt that information and knowledge are key elements to support the educational organizational models of society, the nub of the problem then lies in verifying how much these transformations of the formal and traditional institutions have been and will be able to solve.

If it is considered that the school is a technology, then it can be assumed that it has a performative character, and thus, it can be recognized that the school has not always been the way it is now, this fact entails accepting the transformations undergone by its structure, methods, characteristics and even aims. In this sense, school-educational processes do not need to be centered in the model of the industrial society in the understanding that it is not necessary to train subjects for societies that no longer exist (Burke, 2002).

The traditional school model deploys its strategies from the word, especially to develop reading-writing operations that allow people to be efficient and capable of functioning at work (Feixa, 2010). Given that the production environments have changed, how can it be justified that the school and education maintain the same principles with which they have been operating for many years? The answer is very simple; there is no logical or practical reason for education to work the same way.

Never before had information flowed, been produced and used by people through an elaborate system of relations and devices that involve individuals, companies, governments and institutions of the widest range. Take the university, for example, an entity that is essential for today’s societies, after a long process of institutionalization, they are once again faced with the challenge of reflecting about its objectives, but above all, they have to do so from their practices and the way they operate in view of the formation of a society that is characterized by networking and by having few obstacles to access information (Piscitelli, 2015).

The challenge is twofold for the universities in the sense that they have the responsibility of training citizens that are specialists and professionals in many disciplines, and, at the same time, they have to evaluate and adapt their practices to the current problems and challenges. In this sense, the activity of educational institutions (including the university) cannot only be limited to the mere description of the political, communicational, cultural and economic contexts and settings, but also they must find the mechanisms to transcend effectively in a context marked by the drastic changes occurring in many aspects of social life.

16.3 Educating Oneself and Learning in Other Ways

Questioning school- and-literacy-centered education entails the challenge of looking into alternative ways of learning that are already taking place and how culture is transforming the teaching practices, the model
based on the capacity to read and write and on job-oriented training (Dussel, 2012). This act of questioning formal education should be understood from three dimensions: (1) intentionality (to teach-learn) is not always a sine qua non condition, which means that the fact that they are at school does not ensure that the students want or are willing to learn or that the teachers want to or can teach; (2) recognizing the existence of processes that are different from that of formal schooling to promote learning; and (3) the subjects’ mediatized experiences change predisposition to learn certain contents instead of others (Orozco, 2004).

But going from formal literacy and schooling to other learning models involves developing a critical eye that questions both the objective (intentionality) of teaching how to read and write and the procedure used to attain it (traditional schooling). In this sense, the idea is to explain the problem from the point of view of the need to reflect about the centrality of learning in education, as a way of moving the focus from the institutional to the subjects, given that, ultimately, the learning processes are present and updated in the people, not (necessarily) in the institutions.

Speaking of (formal and informal) learning in terms of an inside/outside, where what happens at school is valid and legitimate and what happens outside is inert and valueless, involves a risk because conceptual richness is limited inasmuch as it is restricted to the spaces rather than to the practices and experiences. As Martin-Barbero accurately suggested (2002, p. 4), “education crisscrosses everything and we learn everywhere and at all times”, so learning does not occur inside or outside, but in a space-time continuum.

Hence it is crucial to wonder: what are the practices that trigger learning that do not occur in an environment that is not governed by planning, hierarchization, evaluation or reward-punishment like? How valuable it is to assume that, in order to consider certain learning as meaningful, it must be oriented by the interests, likes and aspirations of every subject or group? And could this result in the inclusion of practices oriented to enjoyment, entertainment, leisure, discovery and recreation? (Ferrés & Piscitelli, 2012).

This problematization that approaches education from the viewpoint of culture and communication acknowledges that informal learning has three defining key elements to be explored: the participating agents, communication channels and the emotional domain. The participating agents that are involved are usually other peers with the same degree of experience, power or interests; the communication channels are kept open at all times and involve a multiplicity of textualities, and the emotive is as important as logical reasoning (Brunner, 2001).

Some authors see informal learning as the result of an ongoing conversation and exploration of new environments, people and subject matters (Wilson, 2012; Wong & Partridge, 2016). To go from an understanding of education to an analysis of learning is actually a way of refocusing
and reflecting on the culture (as a more specific dimension of educational realm) where the learning experience occurs. This approach does not entail a denial of the traditional forms of learning, but rather an alternative to these forms.

Eventually, educational institutions will have to turn and look at self-learning, network learning, interactivity, cooperation and collective creativity practices as essential principles to be integrated to school-training practices, but not as an added or incorporated element, but as a transforming philosophy that promotes evolution in the interests of an ever-richer and meaningful educational experience.

In traditional school education, the motivation to learn something is usually placed as something external to the learning object and process. In this regard, it should be considered that school learning usually occurs with a use in mind, or from a supplementary value such as a prosperous future, acknowledgements, awards, the promise of a job, etc. (Paradise, 2005). It is necessary to consider that, with informal learning, motivation and initiative to learn are mainly related to the knowledge or skills that will be built as a result of the process. In this case, the incentive is usually linked with personal wishes, leisure, enjoyment or pleasure and the expectations of practical application (Amar & Isola, 2014). Evidently, these types of motivations are very different from the ones existing in formal educational contexts.

On the other hand, Orozco (2002, p. 2) presents it in terms of informal learning, as an alternative, that does not flow from teaching to learning, but rather, it occurs through “educommunication disorders in the times, environments and knowledge processes”. Given the exacerbated presence of media and communication technologies in everyday life, the possibility of being educated in settings that were not meant for education has increased. The disorders that the author refers to concern the linguistic, institutional, temporal and spatial realms as crucial elements to acknowledge the changes in the ways learning is built. In this sense, regarding the motivations of the practices that translate as learning is a crucial dimension of the analysis proposed here, inasmuch as they are at the basis of participation cultures.

**16.4 The Stimulus of Life Itself for New Learning**

The wise phrase of the Colombian Nobel Prize recipient, Gabriel García Márquez (2002), on entitling his autobiography *Vivir para contarla* carries profound learning, and it turned into great teaching for his readers: life is not how it is lived but how it is told. And that empowers audiences, and saves them from self-esteem crises even if momentarily, and yet, let refined intellectuals judge audiovisual contents as a series of “foolishness”. This “foolishness” when viewed by the audiences illuminates their visions, stimulates their senses and emotions, and becomes devices that
generate ideas and diverse understanding, not of a school subject, or of a line of knowledge, but of something much more than that (Orozco & Miller, 2016).

Philosopher Steven Johnson (2005) precisely poses, in his book: Everything Bad is Good for You, the question of how popular culture today is, in fact, making us more intelligent? And he comments that, although it is not evident to anyone, sometimes not even to the one learning, several different types of learning occur in situations related to screens. He mentions the case of a video game player, highlighting that what he does on the screen is to practice nothing less than “scientific reasoning”, inasmuch as he should have a hypothesis of how to beat his enemy, and from there he must work out a strategy with which to be successful in his endeavor. This strategy is a deduction, therefore, the hypothetical-deductive cycle typical of the scientific mental process is being carried out using once and again the result of the player’s decisions. Thus, and without the player even realizing it, necessarily, a type of reasoning that is very much appreciated in science and philosophy is being practiced. At the same time, the video game player is making his own rules, which involves the appropriation of his previous learning, according to his hypotheses and deductions, which are regularities and they can be applied in future games and other scenarios successfully. Hence the prospective quality of his learning enables him to have some certainties in new scenarios, at least to begin going through them.

The reason why video game players can spend many hours playing is not escapism from reality or alienation, as parents as well as educational authorities and teachers usually claim; but quite the contrary, it is because of their concentration, because they feel challenged in their intelligence and creativity by the games they play. But above all because they feel and they are aware that they are permanently gratified. This, according to Johnson (2005), is great motivation that generates and reinforces learning.

Other authors have shown how video playing children develop a prospective intelligence, in which different possible wanted or unwanted scenarios are evaluated permanently, and, according to them, decisions are made strategically in the future (Gee, 2003).

By contrast, children and teenagers claim that they get bored in their classes at school. They make use of the playground during the recess to become again motivated subjects and then be able to put up with tedium or the lack of stimuli in the long hours that they have to endure day after day in the school premises (García, 2015).

16.5 Learning on Your Own: Doing and Participating

Self-education is not something new or exclusive of today’s contexts. What is really novel, though, is the fact that learning has diversified in such a way that it has become common to learn on your own thanks to
the ease with which information can be accessed, almost at any moment, and by means of automated, ubiquitous, multi-transmedia systems. Evidence of this is the promotion of hundreds of MOOCs (Massive Online Open Courses) and the constant growth of the maker and DIY culture, who have managed, each in their own way, to develop strategies based on self-management, collaboration and self-communication of the masses as key aspects to share, assimilate and produce information and this way promote multiple learning and experiences (Corona Rodríguez, 2018b).

In this context, it is very important to assume the creative and productive potential of media audiences to participate in the generation of communicative contents facilitated by cultural convergence, which does not mean deliberately overlooking the conventional hierarchies between producers and consumers in social structures and cultural industries. This is mainly due to the fact that the differences in terms of economic capacities and access to “professional” resources for the production of media contents continue to be evident, no matter how many alternatives there are to generate contents such as YouTube, social networks, open software, etc.; in this context, the concept proposed by Castells would be evident (2010), the one about mass self-communication, which describes the capacity the users have to post personal messages that have mass potentials, without denying the existence of the traditional structure in which contents are produced and consumed.

Beyond focusing only on interactive technologies (and their effects), it is crucial to observe, document and re-promote the interactions that are occurring among media consumers, contents and producers. In the sense that participative culture (Jenkins, 2009a) intends to magnify three chief dimensions: first, the new communication technologies that encourage the consumers to appropriate and re-circulate the media content at their disposal; second, a large group of communities that promote, for example, Do It Yourself to produce media and news contents; and, third, the economic trends that support the media conglomerate propitiates the flow of images, ideas and narratives through multiple media demanding greater diversity of participation by the people.

This demand for participation has translated in an ongoing, active exercise of audiences’ involvement with information, messages and means of production that no doubt have transformed the sense and the forms in which education operates, both in its formal and in its informal dimension.

Practices that are as current and characteristic as DIY, the creation of podcasts, video tutorials, etc., have meant a renewed interest in self-creation and have facilitated a vindication of the subjects’ expressive possibilities in accordance with media contents as a result of an alternative to the production of contents, materials and ideas that used to be made only by corporations or companies. In this context of change, the idea of participation as a way of doing things and acting has promoted the
existence of communities organized only on the basis of affinity. This, of course, has entailed a great organizational transformation in the way in which it is learned together and collectively, in which the differences among the pupils are ever larger.

In terms of the communities, Jenkins (2009b) suggests that DIY does not mean do it yourself on your own; quite the contrary: the social and collaborative component is essential to give rise to meaning, learning and knowledge-transfer experiences. The importance of DIY to participation culture implies acknowledging in the practices of media production (and also those of hardware and software) a reformulation of the ways in which people learn collectively, collaboratively and in the interests of leisure, entrepreneurship, innovation and civic culture.

16.6 Back to the Future

Many are the elements of the debate around this great mutation of the current origin of learning and therefore of education. We will focus here on some of the communicational challenges that would improve education and the pedagogical efforts to facilitate learning.

16.7 Writing to Be Read

That is perhaps the best motivation and at the same time gratification of any writing effort. This motivation has always existed and has been focused on writing letters to our loved ones or writing in a newspaper or magazine for readers, or just completing a book. On the current social networks, writing has even become compulsive, and it is precisely because users, turned into interlocutors, are aware that others read them. In view of this, what is the school rationale for writing? Writing the correct answers in an exam? The vast majority of the material students are told to read is written by others. It is alien to them.

16.8 Recording to Listen and to Be Listened To

Going from the music that we then play back on the device at our disposal, to the “What’s Apps” with our own voice, these are ways of enjoying at other moments and in the company of others the sounds we like and our own sound that we play back; in the case of music it would be a selection that we have decided to keep to listen to later for whatever reason, and in the case of the social networks, the idea is to make ourselves present in the most “live” possible way to others. The voice communicates other things in addition to what the written word or an image communicates. By means of the voice and the variation of tones, we are able to penetrate in the realm of emotions and thus attain better communication precisely from everything that “is not said but is heard”.

16.9 Photographing, Filming and Video Recording to View Ourselves and to Be Viewed

Although selfies are in vogue, and they can be taken with cell phones without any difficulty, the visual and audiovisual exercises these current devices presuppose allow us like never before to capture images, movement and expressions of our own and those of others. There is a significant gratification in viewing ourselves and viewing others and in viewing “other things”. Teachers do not usually take advantage of this motivation, which could come in handy for several learning purposes. For example, if the students were asked to exercise expression from images or to present their reading comprehension with images, or creating memes to illustrate their understanding of events. All of these products that are meant “to be viewed and shared” involve mental exercises of a different kind and intensity.

16.10 Surfing the Networks (Not Get Lost in Them) to Be Found and Acknowledged

These purposes are revolutionizing communication and they could revolutionize education. The gratification of encounter is very strong. It has been present on TV fiction, especially on melodramas. The typical Latin-American telenovela (soap-opera) always entails an encounter: the child who finally finds their mother or father, the mother who finds her child on the last chapter, the lover who finds their beloved or siblings who are reunited after having grown separated, etc.; misunderstandings that are always the leitmotivs to maintain the audiences loyal to the episodes of the telenovela. And today more than ever the social networks fulfill this function that focuses above all on the recognition caused by encounters. What other gratification can be greater than that of being recognized?

The previous examples are nothing but possibilities that could be used to encourage learning both within and without schools, of course. All of them have something in common: they all respond to re-addressing the elements they include; these elements are set in a perspective or dynamics that is compatible with that “great change of Era” not with an era of great changes. As we have tried to show here, that calls for a change in mentality, not only of ideas, in the analysis of education and communication, but above all in its relation and the relative importance of its constituents.

16.11 Learning Together: “Disorganized” Communities

A decade ago, Shirky (2008, p. 32) suggested that the consolidation of the Internet in societies would open up the possibility for a “massive effort of solidarity and collaboration to manage to converge in social
causes and social movements on a large scale”. The premise was not wrong, as it has been seen in recent years; the rise of collaborative movements and communities that intend to transform their reality has grown in a significant manner.

Thanks to that, we have witnessed a growing interest in understanding social movements and uprisings with democratic aspirations, by means of the use of technologies, which have emerged in many countries around the world. These forms of protest, visibility and activism can be interpreted even in terms of cyber utopias (Cobo, 2018), which condense the strategic use of interactive digital technology and society’s organized collective action, and ultimately in communicative strategies that derive into meaningful learning and experiences for those involved in them (boyd, 2017).

But the idea of the people’s organizational capacity, beyond formal organizations, is neither new nor exclusive to the current, converging environment of communication; it emerged from the economic theory when it postulated that organizations have a maximum point of usefulness which is reached when the integration of a new member brings about more cost than benefits for the community as a whole. This particularity of organizations has been transforming with the advent of the Internet, where the cost of organizations is close to zero due to the willing participation of thousands of people who have the desire to collaborate on an issue or practice (Benkler, 2006). This is corroborated in participation movements and cultures such as that of fans, makers, DIYers, hackers, YouTubers, gamers, etc., given that their collaboration is not conditioned exclusively by the desire or need to participate, but also it is driven by the operative and technical conditions of the social media and cultural dispositions that favor action even without generating formal integration or significant collaboration.

The experience of websites such as Wikipedia has made it possible to see that social participation can be decentralized and flexible before the defined and power roles of traditional organizations. These forms of community collaboration promote participation in a much more voluntary and free manner, which consolidates the possibility of participating without the need to add more cost to the organizations, or without even the need for an organization to direct and lead the contributions.

No doubt all of this implies obvious incompatibilities between the schooled world of education in its traditional sense and the educational and learning alternatives that are occurring as a result of ever more mediated, virtual, ubiquitous and instantaneous interactions in the world of communication. Collective learning is becoming more and more the norm, especially because it is precisely in collaboration that those that communicate find the sense of the actions and messages they send. This can be made visible even through the shared emotional culture that proliferates on the socio-digital networks, where there is an eagerness to become involved with others in the creation of significant experiences.
16.12 Intensive, Collective Mediated Learning

Undoubtedly education, teaching and schooling will continue to be essential in society, among other reasons because they are the best organized processes and the ones with the greatest experience to train subjects. It seems very complicated for there to occur an educational revolution on a larger scale, there are no political, economic and cultural conditions in place for radical changes to occur any time soon in the ways in which people learn and get to know the world. The utmost urgency is to train subjects that are capable of using favorably their educational experience to transform their own trajectories and learning strategies.

In this sense, self-managed exploration and discovery are shaping up as two essential possibilities to systematize and give prominence to the collective learning that occur in all kinds of communities and groups.

In-depth exploration is understood as a modality that is different from the ways in which subjects are used to interacting with the information available in school logics, which is characterized by planning content access in a rigid and (at times) excessively programmed manner. In academic dynamics, a certain number of hours is usually dedicated to a subject matter, topic or the development of a skill, and this presupposes progression in the sense that the students should be making headway according to a timetable, at a pace and in the school’s timing.

As it could be observed in the communities approached, these logics are absolutely out of phase in view of the possibility of “binging” on information and contents without any kinds of restrictions. The maker community, for example, organizes and participates in hackathons or Super Happy Dev Parties-House, which basically consist in work encounters where the objective is to undertake a project nonstop. The ultimate motivation of this type of activities is to learn, or in some cases to put into practice what they have learned. To achieve this undertaking, these events can last for several days in a row. Activities of this type are based on very detailed and profound theme explorations, which result in an unusual intensity in the access to information and the production of contents.

These events are understood as emerging learning modalities, inasmuch as they strive for thematic delving in a short period of time and for that same reason it is definitely contradictory to school logic.

In the case of fans, “binges” are organized on the basis of media contents. For example, marathons to watch films or series, and encounters to read in a group an entire book all at once or to finish a game (either a board or a video game) from beginning to end without any pauses. In this case, the intensity of the exploration is defined by the intensity of the appropriation of the contents and by the generation of a more profound implication in the narrative or in the community.
16.13 Media-Information Literacy Necessary in the Learning Society

Beyond the instrumental mastery of different technological packages necessary to move deftly in the contemporary digital environment, the necessary literacy concentrates on developing and strengthening at least two capacities in every citizen. On the one hand, their analytical capacity to “make evident” what is not evident on its own. On the other hand, the creative-productive capacity to position themselves actively and assertively as interlocutors in the different communicative exchange circuits where they participate.

16.14 The Image Must Be Made Evident Because It Is Not So on Its Own!

Making evident what is not so on its own is a great challenge for everyone in the media-digital world, which is strongly supported by images, not so much by words. In the times of writing, or even before that, in the times of oratory and preaching, where the word devoid of images defined and communicated the meaning of the communicated thought, the image played the role of confirming what was said, of serving as the last redoubt of truth: “I saw it with my own eyes” was presented and defended as the irrefutable evidence of what it had been or what had happened. By contrast, that which could not be seen was questionable, it might not be true. The image always appeared as convincing proof before the spoken or written word.

With the advent of audiovisual media, first the cinema (moving pictures) and then television, the criteria of truth were disrupted. The cinema showed visions that, though they denoted a reality, they did not intend to be passed off as reality as such, but rather as reality viewed through the director’s or the cameraman’s eyes, who were precisely making use of their creativity making special takes of specific realities or inserting special effects of light, color, camera movements, etc., to show the audiences not reality as such but, the particular vision that the filmmaker had of a specific reality.

Television, in turn, was promoted as the only one capable of “having the viewer become a witness right there where events were happening”. An intention that has seemed possible since the cameramen who report events as they happen, unlike film directors, try to capture and convey what is going on. Nevertheless, the catch of TV resides right there, in its capacity to “erase the footprints of its positioning” in front of the reality it captures. Not because the cameraman lacks intentionality when he focuses on certain elements, his focus stops being a representation of the object focused on. What is focused on is necessarily a cutoff of a larger reality. This is explained by the fact that it is the lens that passes over
reality capturing certain things, not reality getting into the lens. Thus, television came to change the objects of knowledge for us, since what we viewers watch with our own eyes is not the objects themselves but their representation, irrespective of other stylistic interventions by the producers of TV image.

Deep down the greater difference between the cinema and television is that the cinema does not intend to show reality like it is but the way the film director wants to show it or wants it to be. And that is evident. In turn, television does not make the coordinates of its representation evident, partly because of the immediacy of its transmissions, above all when reporting events as news, and partly because what reporters seek is to be able to convey what is happening and “exactly how it is happening”, even though that is impossible due to the necessary cut of the camera lens and the resulting perspective from which reality is taken to be transmitted.

16.15 Acquiring Hacker Skills!

Strengthening their productive, creative capacity to position themselves assertively as interlocutors presupposes, in turn, two acts of acknowledgment. The first is the understanding that as audiences we are not just passive receptors of the different media-information products. Television assumed us and “condemned us” for many years to be “quiet” audiences. The new media, though, demands that we become active and, let’s hope, bold audiences, inasmuch as we are users who interact with what we see on the screens.

Culturally, a fundamental change has occurred in our position in front of the screen and in our relation to their products; there has been a change in the requirements to reposition ourselves before the world.

Contemporary multiple media information interpellation also calls for a multiple interaction, above all one that is assertive but careful. We need to be provocateurs, not followers, we need to be creative, not imitators, we need to be analytical, not conformists, we need to be bold, but cautious with Internet sites and offers. We need to be aware that much of what is at stake in the digital world is our privacy and our personal integrity as netsurfing citizens.

All the above are, rather than slogans, goals to be attained by means of media information literacy that is in accordance with the current times and with the requirements that the digital environment demands from all of us as citizens.

References


17 Critical revision of the critical sense

Joan Ferrés

17.1 Introduction

A kind of media education became established in the United States decades ago, whose primary, if not exclusive, objective was to initiate students in the praxis of professional mass communication. The students would learn to produce news items, advertising spots, movies and series, using the parameters of the mainstream mass media as a reference.

It is, of course, a kind of learning that is necessary in the era of emi.recs and prosumers, that is, in an era where technologies make it possible for all citizens to be emitters and receivers of messages, producers of their own messages and consumers of the messages of others.

The problem arises when this learning is provided without appealing to the critical sense, without questioning the praxis of media professionals and without examining the ideology and explicit or latent values in both a person’s own messages and those of others.

Although it is probably possible to find examples of this conception of media education in all countries of the world, the truth is that, in most of them, in both the Anglo-Saxon and Hispanic American countries, when media education is taught, it tends to place the accent on strengthening the critical sense of citizens.

In these pages, we assume the centrality of the critical sense in media education; however, being tuned to this option does not exclude the need to express some objections to the way that this type of education is usually carried out. In other words, critical sense cannot be critically reviewed from the conceptual denial of the importance of this dimension, but rather from the verification of the shortcomings observed in its application to everyday practice.

In the following pages, we discuss four shortcomings: a conception of media education that does not go beyond critical thinking, a media education that is limited to the criticism of information and discourses; media education exclusively concerned with the criticism of messages; and finally, media education focused on the concept of critical consciousness.

This critical review is based on two sources of information. The first source is the neuroscience contributions made during the last decades.
about the mechanisms that govern the functioning of the human mind. For the first time in the history of humanity, we can talk about the mind in a scientific way. The other source is the data obtained from two previous research projects led by the Pompeu Fabra University. In one project, the teaching plans of all media education subjects that are taught in the education and communication studies of all the Spanish public and private universities were analyzed (Ferrés, Masanet, & Mateus, 2018; Masanet & Ferrés, 2012; Ferrés et al. 2013; Ferrés & Masanet, 2015).

In the second research project, a semantic analysis was made of the ten institutional documents that, in the opinion of more than 100 international experts in media education, are considered to be the most relevant in the evolution of media education in the world during the last 50 years (Ferrés, Figueras-Faz, Masanet, & Hafner, 2016; Ferrés & Masanet, 2017).

17.2 Beyond Critical Thinking

In the semantic analysis of both the teaching guides of the media education subjects of Spanish universities and the most relevant institutional documents on media literacy in the world, we revised how many times the term “critical” appeared and determined to which noun it was the adjective. It was found that the most frequent nouns were understanding, analysis, thinking, reading, evaluation, vision and reflection. In short, all terms linked to the cognitive field.

In the specific case of the media education subjects of the Spanish universities, in 52 of the 194 educational guides analyzed (in 26.80%), there was not a single reference to “critical”. And in the 142 course guides (one 73.20%) that did contain a reference (a total of 613 references), they are all located in the cognitive field.

If we add up the three most cited terms of the cognitive field (critical analysis, critical incorporation and critical vision), we get a total of 170 references. On the other hand, adding up the three most cited terms of the semantic field of emotion (critical attitude, critical stance and critical use), we only reach 37 references.

In the institutional documents, the terms critical and critically were found to appear 328 times. But there are significant differences in the way this critical sense is conceived. These terms are primarily associated with words from the cognitive semantic field. The most referenced expressions are critical thinking (28 references), evaluate critically (27 references), critical analysis (14 references), critically assess (11 references) and critical understanding (11 references). There are also other expressions associated with the cognitive that appear with less references, including critical reflection (five references), critical approach (four references), critical reading (four references) and critical evaluation (two references).
There are documents in which the terms associated with critical could be considered neutral: *critical awareness* (seven references) and *critical stance* (two references). But there are only three documents (Masterman, 1983; Unesco, 1980; Wilson, Grizzle, Tuazon, Akyempong, & Cheung, 2011) in which the reference to critical is openly linked with terms of an emotional character: *critical attitude* (10 references), *critical engagement* (two references) and *critical empathy* (two references). But even in these three documents, references of a cognitive nature are much more frequent: *critical thinking* (14 references), *critically evaluate* (18 references) and *critical understanding* (six references). It is also curious that two of the three documents that most associate critical with attitude belong to the last century.

If we group the references to all the terms of the semantic field of cognition and compare them with those of the semantic field of emotion, the result is 2,462 terms compared to 395. The disproportion is, well, impressive.

The knowledge about the functioning of the human mind acquired during the last decades through neuroscience (Damasio, 1996, 2005; LeDoux, 1999) shows the insufficiency of a cognitive-centered approach. It has been effectively demonstrated that humans are moved by their emotions. Thoughts, ideas and values only move a person if they have an emotional charge. A quote from the American neurobiologist Donald Calne confirms this: “The essential difference between reason and emotion is that, while emotion leads to action, reason leads to drawing conclusions” (cited by Roberts, 2005, p. 42).

It is clear that the intention of media education is the personal transformation of the student. It is not enough that they simply draw conclusions, or that they know and understand. It is essential that they get involved, commit themselves and act. Knowledge is necessary but insufficient. The objective of media education should not be critical thinking but rather critical attitude, because only attitude (like emotion) involves a predisposition to act in a certain direction.

17.3 Beyond the Criticism of Information and Discourses

In the analysis of the teaching guides of the media education subjects of the Spanish universities, it can be observed that media education is almost exclusively polarized towards the critical processing of information. It could be said that media competence is equated with informational competence, forgetting what cyberspace represents in terms of searching for interpersonal relationships (Marta Lazo & Gabelas, 2016), training and fun. Information is reduced to discourse, relegating or marginalizing the narrative and the story.

Processing information is discussed in 100% of the 194 teaching guides analyzed, but only 10.31% of them (equivalent to 20 guides)
include terms related to the semantic field of entertainment and fun. Only 21.65% (equivalent to 42 of the 194 teaching guides) include the semantic field of narration and storytelling.

Something similar occurs in the institutional documents for promoting media education in the world. This can be seen in the results of the semantic field analysis of the ten selected documents. While the term “news” appears 631 times in the set of 10 documents, the term “story/ies” appears only 133 times. The word “knowledge” appears 557 times, but the term “game” appears only 62 times.

If we calculate the total number of times that terms linked to the semantic field of information appear, we obtain the result of 4,489 references. If we do the same with the terms linked to the semantic field of entertainment, the result is 352 references.

And as if this reductionism was not already excessive, among the ten institutional documents that, in the opinion of the experts, have contributed in a special way to the expansion of media education in the world, there is a particularly significant text: UNESCO speaks in 2011 of Media and Information Literacy (Wilson et al., 2011), that is, they talk of media information and information as if the informational was not part of the media.

This reductionism is serious for two reasons: first, because children, adolescents and young people approach cyberspace in search of relationships and entertainment as much as or more than in search of information. But also, and above all, because today neuroscience has shown that stories are much more effective than discourses in persuasive communication.

There is a growing body of research that highlights the superior efficacy of the narrative over the discourse in persuasive communication (Heath & Heath, 2008; Lehrer, 2010; Ramachandran, 2011; Sadowsky & Roche, 2013; Simmons, 2006; Volpi, 2011). In order to mobilize an interlocutor, it is more effective to employ the emotional implication aroused by a story than the rational conviction resulting from the accumulation of information. While explicit information mobilizes the cerebral cortex as a priority, the story provokes an integral mobilization of the brain: it induces cognition through a sensory jolt, an activation of the motor system and an empowerment of the limbic system.

While the academic world limits itself to training the informational competence, the ability to process, analyze, select, contrast, organize, synthesize and communicate information, the professionals of persuasive communication increasingly avoid using discourses and explicit information, and resort rather to stories and storytelling.

Discourse activates, at best, the cerebral cortex (the rational brain), while stories mobilize the cortex based on a previous integral activation of the perceptual, motor and emotional systems, thanks to mirror neurons (Ramachandran, 2011; Rizzolatti & Sinigaglia, 2006). This explains its mobilizing potential.
In short, reducing the media to the informational prevents citizens from being competent and critical in their interaction with the stories and messages that primarily seek interpersonal relationships and entertainment.

17.4 Beyond the Criticism of Messages

From the analysis of the teaching guides and the institutional documents, it is clear that the object of criticism must be the media messages. In the cases in which there is a broader view, it is not limited exclusively to informative messages. Reference is also made to advertising and entertainment: video games, series, movies, etc.

However, the critical sense seldom goes beyond the criticism of products, the messages. In the set of 194 teaching guides of media education subjects, the term “critical” is referenced 613 times, and only 16 of them are a reference to self-criticism.

In the institutional documents that nourish media education, it is also difficult to find, albeit implicitly, any allusion to self-criticism. The aim is to get citizens to learn to critically analyze products or content and almost never to learn to analyze critically in interaction with these products or contents.

In other words, screens are thought of as windows that allow us to access reality, all kinds of reality. It is not usually taken into account the possibility that the screens act as mirrors and, consequently, are an opportunity for a person to find themselves, to face their dark side and to bring out their unconscious so that they discover their internal contradictions (Klein, 2004).

This time the reductionism comes from forgetting that the media experience is the result of an interaction between a message and an interlocutor. The paradox of this reductionism is that, in the best cases, the students will leave school, in the Knowledge Society, knowing everything except the most important thing: themselves.

17.5 Beyond Critical Consciousness

The critical sense is always associated with the concept of full consciousness. And, effectively, the word conscious appears frequently in the documents linked to media education; however, the word unconscious seldom appears.

In the set of 194 teaching guides, a term linked to the semantic field of the unconscious appears only once. In the ten institutional documents, the word unconscious is used three times and the word subconscious only once. In all four cases, these are anecdotal references, without relevance to what should be an academic approach to this reality. However,
in this same set of documents, 165 references are made to the concept of consciousness.

From the analysis of the semantic fields of the selected documents, it is clear, then, that in media education, it is not necessary to use the unconscious so that the interaction with the media is mature and helps the subject to enhance their personal autonomy.

The absence of terms related to the unconscious in the practice of media education acquires particular relevance and severity when we read the works of a neuroscience professional as qualified as Joseph LeDoux: “The conscious can only be understood if you study the unconscious processes that make it possible” (LeDoux, 1999, p. 32). In short, we cannot extract all the possible benefits of media experiences if they are not used as an opportunity to access the unconscious, an essential requirement to be able to understand ourselves in depth (Keysers, 2011; Mlodinow, 2013; (Renvoisé & Morin, 2006; Van Praet, 2012).

It is important to be aware that unconscious brain activity conditions the conscious: “Unconscious judgments not only occur before the conscious, they also guide them” (Zaltman, 2004, p. 95). From these discoveries, it is not strange that Daniel Kahneman, Nobel Prize winner in Economics, says, when he talks about rationality and awareness, that the deliberative system is a secondary character who believes it is the protagonist (Kahneman, 2012, p. 48). Or that David Eagleman (2013) affirms that the conscious self is the most secondary character of the brain, it is something like a young monarch who inherits the throne and takes credit for the glory of the country..., without ever noticing the millions of workers that make the nation work (p. 123). Or “the conscious mind is not the one driving the boat” (p. 233). Carl G. Jung expressed himself in a similar vein: “Until you make the unconscious conscious, it will continue to direct your life and you will call it destiny” (cited in Van Praet, 2012, p. 27).

17.6 Expanding the Critical Sense

We finish these pages in the same way as we began, asserting that the critical sense is the backbone of media education, but also affirming the need to review the treatment it is given in everyday practice.

The need to go beyond critical thinking to reach the critical attitude has been asserted. The need to incorporate the relational dimension (the R factor), that of the story and entertainment, and thus overcome the polarization into the informational, has also been affirmed. We believe in the need to incorporate self-knowledge and self-criticism in the experience of interaction with screens. Finally, we claim the need to take advantage of media experiences to access the unconscious, as an essential requirement for full consciousness.
It is possible to go on to affirm that the critical sense should go beyond ideology and values to also address the dimension of languages (a multimedia and multimodal communication, which should always use the most appropriate form of communication based on the type of content that needs to be transmitted and the communicative function that it is the aim to achieve).

The critical sense should also address the aesthetic dimension, the journey from the pleasure of what they tell me to the pleasure of how they tell me, to overcoming mediocrity, to the cultivation of sensitivity and originality.

In short, the call for a critical sense must be accompanied by its revision, as it needs to be expanded if it is to contribute to the full development of people and society.

Notes

1 This chapter has been translated thanks to the support of Medium Research Group – Universitat Pompeu Fabra.

2 Emirec is a concept coined by Jean Cloutier and refers to the possibility of being both transmitters and receivers. Prosumer is a concept developed by Alvin Toffler and refers to the possibility of being both producers and receivers of messages.

References


18 Transmedia literacy and participatory cultures.
A research agenda

Carlos A. Scolari

18.1 Towards Transmedia Literacy

The changes in the media ecology have unlocked the discussion about the pertinence of traditional definitions of ‘media literacy’ and the emergence of new literacies. Is it still possible to talk about ‘media literacy’ in a context where the broadcasting (one-to-many) model is being displaced by the network (many-to-many) communication paradigm? Researchers like David Buckingham have defended the ‘need for a new definition of literacy [...] not tied to particular technologies or practices’ but rather one that ‘allows us to look at the competencies that are developed across the whole range of culture and communication’ (1993, p. 20).

Media literacy researchers and practitioners are being challenged by the emergence of new media producing, sharing and consuming practices. Media literacy can no longer be limited to the critical analysis of media contents or the acquisition of skills inside the formal education system. In this new context, the traditional media ‘receiver’ is now a ‘prosumer’ (a concept introduced by Toffler, 1980) or ‘participatory creator’ (Meyers, Erickson, & Small, 2013), an active subject who creates and shares contents in the digital networks. Researchers of new media literacy have identified a set of competencies defined as ‘prosuming skills’. These are the skills necessary for producing/creating media contents, and range from the ability to set up an online communication account to using software to generate digital contents and programming. These skills often work together with distribution, remixing and participation skills (Lin, Li, Deng, & Lee 2013). Therefore, transmedia literacy can enrich the concept of traditional media literacies and reposition the theoretical approaches to the new literacies.

Transmedia literacy could thus be understood as a set of skills, practices, values, priorities, sensibilities and learning/sharing strategies developed and applied in the context of the new participatory cultures. Traditional literacy was book-centred and media literacy mainly television-centred; but multimodal literacy, focusses on digital networks and interactive media experiences as its centre of analytical and practical experience.

Traditional forms of literacy generally treated the subject as illiterate, while media literacy considered the consumer to be a passive spectator;
transmedia literacy, however, considers the subject to be a prosumer. This is probably the most important difference between ‘transmedia literacy’ and other forms of (new) new literacy: in this research, teens were not just interpellated as ‘victims’ of media but as more or less active subjects that use the media in different ways.

The learning space is another important element of transmedia literacy. Traditionally, the school was the institutional learning environment for media literacy. However, the new generations are now developing their transmedia literacy skills outside the school (from YouTube to online forums, social media and blogs). These informal learning spaces are a key component of transmedia literacy research.

In this context, the research questions of the Transmedia Literacy project were the following:

- What are teens doing with media? The outcome was a map of transmedia skills that teens develop outside school.
- How did they learn to do these things? The outcome was a map of informal learning strategies.
- How can these transmedia skills be exploited in formal education environments? The outcome was a Teacher’s Kit to apply and expand the transmedia skills developed outside schools within formal settings.

Regarding the first question, the research team identified 44 first-level and 190 second-level transmedia skills. These skills, developed by teens in informal collaborative environments, include a broad spectrum of competences. Obviously, all of these skills are not innate to adolescents (there are no ‘digital natives’) and they are not evenly distributed: a teen may have strong production or content management skills but no idea about risk prevention or ethical issues. What emerged from the research was a complex topography and uneven distribution of transmedia skills among teens (Scolari, 2018; Figure 18.1).

The research team identified a broad spectrum of skills related to media production (writing, photography, editing audio or video, etc.). As Pereira and Moura put it, “with the proliferation of digital media, young people have at their disposal a wider range of tools that could lead to frequent production and participation practices” (Pereira & Moura, 2018, p. 23). However, the new generations,

while being large media consumers, are more restrained in media production, contradicting some public discourses that circulate an idea of a society in which all young people produce content daily and are prodigal in doing so. It is true that today there are more and better means and conditions for production, but these competences are not innate, they must be developed through work that motivates and empowers young people.

(Pereira & Moura, 2018, p. 23)
Individual management and social skills in particular are under strong development during the teenage years, and we found significant differences in the level of these skills among the teen groups in this study. Issues related to individual management and social management are also quite sensitive and can cause tensions (…)

In the area of social and content management in social media, there is a lot of peer pressure and strong expectations of following common standards. Social media services are also enforcing this through practices like ‘streaks’ (counting the subsequent days certain social media friends have maintained active connection with each other).

(Koskimaa, 2018, p. 33)

Most of the performance skills are related to videogaming. However, other practices – like cosplaying – may be included in this set of skills.

Games are a form of active learning that enable the player to have some control of the game activity and engage in interaction. Games can therefore be considered among the tools for developing transmedia skills, designated as ‘performative skills’, as well as being central...
nodes in the organization of contemporary leisure culture and information societies.

(Pérez & Contreras, 2018, p. 48)

Media and technology skills are directly connected to the adolescents’ use of hardware and software, but also include other competences. As Gaspard and Horst put it,

This dimension includes all the skills related to having knowledge about socio-political media economies, their own media diet, and technological features and languages. It also includes the evaluation and reflection on the qualities or characteristics of software, hardware, and apps. Finally, this set of skills also includes skills related to taking action regarding this knowledge.

(Gaspard & Horst, 2018, p. 52)

Narrative and aesthetic skills are fully transversal as

young people do not usually discriminate between different media and platforms in their consumption habits. They pay more attention to stories and contents according to their affinities and emotions towards the stories regardless of the media platforms used to tell them.

(Guerrero-Pico & Lugo, 2018, p. 60)

In the context of the Transmedia Literacy research, the narrative and aesthetic skills included the following:

- Appreciating aesthetic values.
- Recognizing genres, reconstructing narrative worlds and comparing stories.
- Expressing identities and cosmovisions through narrative (Guerrero-Pico & Lugo, 2018, p. 60).

Finally, skills related to risk prevention as well as ideological and ethical skills were identified during the research; however, they are not as widespread as, for example, production or management skills. According to Masanet and Establés,

new technologies present both risks and potential in the construction of adolescents’ identity as well as in their socialization. Among others, there are risks associated with physical isolation, addictions, cyberbullying, sexting or privacy loss. But there are also potentials such as, for instance, improvement in social relations, the acquisition of media skills or the enhancement of creative abilities or problem-solving skills.

(Masanet & Establés, 2018, p. 69)
In some cases, teens had acquired risk prevention skills in formal learning environments (for example, when policemen specialized in cybercrimes visit schools).

As already indicated, it is impossible for any teenager (or adult) to have all of these skills. Their distribution in society is unequal. In this context, the role of the formal education system is strategic. In the context of the new media ecology, one of the functions of formal learning institutions could be to redistribute and democratize the transmedia skills that teens are developing in informal learning environments. From the perspective of transmedia literacy, the teacher should be considered as a knowledge facilitator, an actor who involves learners in a collaborative learning process. In this context, the teacher should be a flexible, decentralized actor who promotes bottom-up learning. This role would include another set of activities that could be defined as ‘cultural translation’: the teacher as an interface between the educational institution (the classroom, the school) and the external media ecology where the students live and create.

### 18.2 Informal Learning Strategies

Once the teenagers’ transmedia skills had been identified, the Transmedia Literacy research focussed on understanding informal learning strategies: How do teens acquire their transmedia skills? According to Jenkins and his team, young people gain many of their transmedia skills (playing, performing, navigating, etc.) by participating in the informal learning communities abundant in popular culture. Although some teachers and after-school programmes do include some of these skills in their teaching and activities, the integration of these important social skills and cultural competencies “remains haphazard at best. Media education is taking place for some youth across a variety of contexts, but it is not a central part of the educational experience of all students” (Jenkins, Clinton, Purushotma, Robison, & Weigel, 2006, pp. 56–57). Therefore, the informal learning strategies that the new generations are developing and applying have gone almost completely ignored by educators and media researchers. Scholars like Sefton Green (2006, 2013) have described research lines in this field that need to be explored and expanded.

During the fieldwork the Transmedia Literacy research team identified six informal learning strategies: learning by doing, problem-solving, imitation, playing, evaluating and teaching. As it can be seen, none of these strategies is a new way of approaching knowledge. In fact, some of these strategies (i.e. learning by doing and problem-solving) have been around for thousands of years. It could be said, therefore, that teens are now applying all of these old informal learning strategies in new digital interactive and collaborative environments. This is the new thing in this specific field: old strategies are applied in new settings.

One of these strategies occupies a central role in teens’ everyday life: imitation. How do teens apply this strategy? By watching videos
in YouTube (video tutorials) and reproducing what they see there. This practice is not limited to teens but is a central learning strategy for solving problems in video games; producing or managing contents; or even doing things in real life, from putting on makeup to deciding what book to read. The findings of the Transmedia Literacy project showed that YouTube is one of the biggest informal learning platforms for teens around the world.

18.3 Research Agenda

After more than three years of work, many topics and critical points that merit further exploration have emerged from the Transmedia Literacy project. The following is a possible research agenda in the transmedia literacy field, which is the place where education converges (and, in Jenkins’s words, sometimes collides) with digital interactive media and collaborative cultures.

18.3.1 From User-Generated Contents to Student-Generated Contents

Research into transmedia storytelling and collaborative cultures has focussed on the textual productions of fan communities. From an educational perspective, research should also include the ‘student-generated’ contents. Schools (and universities) are massive textual production machines that generate every day thousands of gigabytes of data. However, most of this textual production gets lost. Research should focus not only on the semiotic, textual or narratological analysis of these texts: it should also analyse possible ways of recovering and reintroducing at least part of them into the educational processes. Thirty years ago, George Landow, one of the pioneers of applying hypertext in undergraduate learning processes, created textual digital networks that include both canon works and student-generated contents (Landow & Delany, 1994). Why not do something similar in high-schools? Students could learn from the best textual productions of their culture, and expand them with new contributes: a little internal Wikipedia in each school.

18.3.2 Informal Learning Strategies

Compared to teens’ competences and skills, research on informal learning strategies is very limited. Most of the research on informal learning has focussed on in-company learning practices; other research has focussed on public spaces like museums and libraries. The research into new digital interactive media and collaborative cultures, with the exception of Julien Sefton-Green (2006, 2013) and a limited group of scholars, has not been in-depth. In a few words: we still do not know a lot about youth informal learning processes. The Transmedia Literacy project
proposed an ethnographic approach to study these practices, but other perspectives – i.e. from the cognitive sciences – should be activated. Do children and teens learn in the same way in schools as out of them?

In this same area, future research on informal learning strategies should propose a good taxonomy of these practices. Although the Transmedia Literacy team has suggested a classification based on a set of categories (people involved in the process, inter- or trans-generational learning practices, etc.), further research is needed in this area.

18.3.3 Kids Teaching Adults

The Transmedia Literacy research team detected specific cases in which teenagers teach adults skills. Although these situations were not as common as supposed by the mainstream discourse on ‘digital natives’ born ‘with a chip under the arm’, they do exist and merit deeper research. In this context, the ‘learning-by-teaching’ informal strategy should also be analysed in more depth and compared to the rest of the informal learning strategies.

18.3.4 Formal/Informal Learning Environments

The deep transformations of the media ecology are changing many aspects of social life and education. A new characterization of formal and informal learning environments is necessary; however, beyond their description, the relationships between these environments should be at the centre of a research line. What are the exchanges between formal and informal learning settings? How can they be increased? For researchers like Buckingham, the relationships and exchanges between formal and informal education are complex and strategic:

A binary distinction between ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ isn’t especially helpful. By definition, media education involves an encounter between out-of-school knowledge – what we might call more everyday, vernacular knowledge – and the more academic, high-status knowledge promoted by the school. How these two forms of knowledge (or these two varieties of literacy) interact is complex, and often fraught with difficulty.

(Buckingham, 2018, p. 7)

Even if teens are developing transmedia skills outside school, these competences should not be left in that ‘wild’ environment: they should be recovered and reworked into formal educational settings to reduce the primacy of only-commercial logics

For better or worse, schools are going to remain vital (and indeed compulsory) institutions in this respect. Both formal and informal
learning take place across different settings, both outside and inside schools. Out-of-school settings (whether they are more private, like families, or more public, like community-based youth projects) have their own constraints; and online spaces are also constrained and structured in their own ways, both by the commercial imperatives of the companies that provide them, and by the social norms that their users develop and try to enforce.

(Buckingham, 2018, p. 7)

The reduction of the gap between formal and informal learning, the promotion of exchanges between them and a better exploration of their specificities should be key elements at the centre of any innovative educational strategy (see Conclusions).

18.3.5 Professionalization of Youth-Generated Content Production

The career imaginaries of new generations are changing. If, a couple of decades ago, kids wanted to be football players, now they want to be YouTubers. During the Transmedia Literacy research, the team identified a limited but active number of young media producers with almost professional skills. How are they adopting industrial practices – i.e. division of labour involving other young people – in their everyday media activity? Will they transform their hobby into a profession? If so, how will that transition be managed? And more: How do the career imaginaries of new generations mutate? Are there any gender biases in these imaginaries? The professionalization of youth-generated content production is a fascinating research field waiting for its scholars.

18.3.6 YouTube as the Main Informal Learning Platform

Last but not least, we should remember that usually adult scholars and policymakers talk a lot about Facebook… while young teens are no longer using this platform (if they ever did). At present, in 2019, YouTube seems to be the main global informal learning platform. Researchers should go deeper into the learning practices that take place in this platform. At the same time, research should also focus on inter-platform migrations and different generational uses of them.

18.4 Conclusions

Beyond the different research objects and questions, the Transmedia Literacy research confirmed the convenience of approaching the relationship between youth, media and education from a different perspective beyond traditional ‘victimism’. In other words: young boys and girls are
not just victims of media; they live in media environments and develop many of their individual and social relationships in mediatized spaces. Like any other interaction environment, media may limit or expand human possibilities of communication and social life. If researchers and practitioners only focus on the negative dimension of new media, they will only increase the gap between formal – the school as the right and only place for education – and informal – mobile devices and social media as devilish tools and places – learning environments.

The Transmedia Literacy team found that, although high schools apply different kinds of strategies to reduce this gap between formal and informal learning environments, there is still a large distance between adolescents’ media and technological practices and the school system. Researchers like Black, Castro and Lin (2015) have confirmed that there is a gap between young people’s savvy use of media outside school in everyday life and the ‘structured, controlled, and often stilted ways they are regularly used within schools’; this gap has been defined as ‘digital dissonance’.

How to reduce this gap? Clark, Logan, Luckin, Mee and Oliver concluded that ‘educators need to consider the kind of skills and knowledge young learners bring to formal milieux’ (2009, p. 4). Clark et al. concluded that

School institutions appear to be slow to realize the potential of collaborative, communicative interactions, and the open and flexible potentials of learning ‘beyond the classroom walls’.

(2009, p. 68)

Finally, Clark et al. concluded asking

If young people are acquiring new and valuable skills set in and through their interactions with technologies, how can these usefully be introduced into more specific settings such as formal education?

(2009, p. 57)

The Teacher’s Kit developed by the Transmedia Literacy project was a step in this direction: a set of activities that any high-school teacher can download and apply in the classroom with the objective of (1) exploiting the transmedia skills acquired by teens outside school and (2) reducing the gap between the formal and informal learning settings.

Returning to the best research strategies, the interpellation of young boys and girls as prosumers was a worthwhile element of the Transmedia Literacy vision that we recommend for other teams to apply. Rather than stigmatizing them, teens were asked to share with the researchers what they were doing with/in media. This proved to be extremely fruitful and made it possible to identify these new emerging practices, skills
and learning strategies. We believe that the same approach should be applied in the classroom.

Note
1. This section and the next one are based on Scolari (2018). For more information about the H2020 Transmedia Literacy Project, please visit the project website: www.transmedialiteracy.org

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On the quincentary of Columbus’ first American footprint, cultural theorists from the North are “discovering” Latin American cultural theory... which constitutes a small “boom.” As the contestatory ‘moment’ of 1992 recedes into popular memory, this engagement with the texts of Latin American cultural theorists comes at an opportune time for publishers and academics – who are always happy to colonize new terrain to boost sales or bolster careers – but, more significantly, for the possibility of a meaningful dialogue between intellectual constituencies North and South.

Michael Hoechsmann and Alan O’Connor (1993, p. 1)

Twenty-five years later after co-editing and publishing in English a themed issue of Border/Lines magazine on Latin American Cultural Studies, it is interesting to reflect on the project of “meaningful dialogue between intellectual constituencies North and South” in the broader field of Communication Studies, but also in the specific space of **Educomunicación**. Until the recent past, and frankly before the publication of a book like this one, tracking and tracing signs of **Educomunicación** outside of the Spanish speaking world has been a very difficult endeavor. A marriage of convenience and loose equivalence has been established in the translation of the terms media literacy and **Educomunicación**, but there is little evidence in the Anglosphere of a sustained attempt to disambiguate the concepts from one another. This relates to a broader malaise in intercultural communication, and a hegemonic myopia on the part of Anglosphere Communication research. As Carlos Scolari states in relation to the UK over the years,

only a handful of researchers (among them Philip Schlesinger, the author of the prologue to [Martin-Barbero’s] Communication, Culture and Hegemony) were interested in conversing with Latin American theorists. [The] trans-Atlantic conversations between the UK and Latin America have been barely fluid but always mono-directional (they write, we translate and read).

(2017, p. 167)
Like Scolari, British scholar Nick Couldry argues that this imbalance is provoked by “the world of publishing houses that continue to be dominated by thought that is published in English, or at least French” (2017, p. 113).

In 1993, we at Border/Lines tried to open a window in Canada to the extraordinary outpouring of original work in Communication and cultural studies in Latin America. Our special issue featured translations of both Jesus Martín-Barbero and Nestor García Canclini, as well as short features on feminist criticism, youth mobilization, social movements, a robust selection of related book reviews and a bibliography of recent work. Much of that bibliography stands the test of time: it included the 1988 special issue of Media, Culture & Society on Latin American perspectives on Communication research, the first issue of Travesía: Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies (1992), William Rowe and Vivian Schelling’s encyclopedic Memory and Modernity: Popular Culture in Latin America (1991) and a broad, albeit somewhat eclectic list of Latin American authors and publications. We concluded the introduction of our special issue with a statement that seems remarkably prescient in regard to this volume:

For those who weary of the social and semiotic struggles of a cultural studies made up of audiences, T.V. sets and marginal forms of resistance, the Latin American writings provide a refreshing return to the grittier realities of everyday life on urban streets familiar to the British beginnings of cultural studies. However, and here’s the rub, such recognition – or self mirroring – occludes the vital differences between works which may share many common referents and theoretical frameworks, but which emerge from radically different social and historical matrices. To put it in other terms, it may be the same game, but the round peg won’t fit into the square hole – categorization is not what these writings demand.

(1993, p. 1)

In Latin America, as the works in this volume amply demonstrate, *educomunicación* traces different but parallel routes to the media literacy traditions of the Anglosphere, most of which remain relatively unknown in English-speaking countries. To a great extent, the Anglosphere has not been good at South-North dialogue. In Communication studies, one exception with considerable traction in English-speaking countries is *How to Read Donald Duck* by Ariel Dorfman and Armand Mattelart (1971) which is used in particular to teach the concept of cultural imperialism. The other, and perhaps most significant, common ground is the transformative work of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire who did not work directly in media education, but whose methods and ideas profoundly changed the teaching and learning dynamics in both Latin American *educomunicación* and Anglosphere traditions of media literacy.
19.1 Language and Hegemony

Latin America for many people in Europe and North America is like a theme park where we come to dance and to sing, but never to think.

(Omar Rincón, 2017)

Omar Rincón faced a delicate balancing act when he delivered the opening keynote, “Bastard Mutations of Communication,” at the 2017 International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR) conference in Cartagena, Colombia: he would celebrate Latin American achievements in Communication scholarship to a home crowd of appreciative Latino academics, and simultaneously introduce that tradition to the many assembled Communication scholars from around the world. As he expressed to his dual audience, for the Latin Americans, his description represents a shared memory; for the rest of the audience, this would be a story, a sharing of information. To some extent, his challenge in sharing that story was doubly difficult because he delivered the fast-paced speech in Spanish to an audience where more than half were wearing headsets, dependent on simultaneous translation and translators that struggled to keep to Rincón’s pace. In general, English-speaking academic audiences are not practiced in sitting through conference keynotes in translation, and informal reactions afterwards appeared skewered upon linguistic and cultural lines; those who had listened in Spanish said Rincón’s talk was thought provoking and inspiring, while those who heard it in translation appeared less convinced.

Doubling down on the one strategic advantage he had speaking through translation to the non-Latinos in the audience, Rincón flaunted stereotypes stating, as mentioned above, that “Latin America…. is like a theme park where we come to dance and to sing, but never to think.” He then went on to say, “thus, I want to say that we do think here, and we think of Communication in another way” (my emphasis, 2017). Rincón explained that in Latin America communication is more about mediations than media, more about processes than objects and more about people than industry. Further, he stated that people are at the core of Communication thought in Latin America, that the processes and practices of people’s lived experiences with media form the backdrop to Communication work. It bears mentioning to an Anglophone readership that the concept of popular culture is dramatically different in the Spanish language where popular is an extension of el pueblo which refers to “the people” and is often used with a political intonation to describe a social force that is distinguished from the dominant classes. This is famously articulated in the chant that el pueblo unido jamás será vencido [a united people will never be defeated]. Thus, in Latin America, la cultura popular is a much broader category than in English that can include
activities ranging from organizing marches, painting murals, dancing, playing soccer (fútbol), watching telenovelas (soap operas) on TV and drinking pop from plastic bags.

The articulation of the movement from media to mediations is associated with good reason to the book of the same title by Jesús Martín—Barbero (1987). Guillermo Orozco argues that Mediations marked a movement away from a focus on media texts and institutions that was “the dominant paradigm because the hegemonic Communication research – of Anglo-saxon origin – sustained the premise of McLuhan’s ‘the media is the message’, thus making the media and the messages the central elements, and sometimes exclusively so, of communication processes” (2017, p. 149). Martín-Barbero does not take sole credit for the shift in Latin America from a focus on the cultural imperialist impact of media products to their take-up as part of popular experience, but rather attributes the shift to changes in the body-politic. Says Martín—Barbero: “The stubborn facts of social processes in Latin America are causing us to change the object of study of communication research” (1987: 224). Included in these social processes were conceptual approaches that were shifting away from colonialist dependency models in favor of discourses of democratization and transnationalization, which were less dominance and power driven, and more open to cultural exchange and interplay where individual and social movement subject formation hold sway. Says Martín-Barbero (1987):

What no longer makes sense is to continue to design politics/policies that bifurcate what is taking place in Culture – with a capital C – from what is happening in the masses – in cultural industries and mass media. These cannot be separate political spheres, given that what happens culturally to the masses is fundamental to democracy, if democracy has anything to do with the people (el pueblo).

(pp. 228–229)

Martín-Barbero proposes a “nocturnal map” to find a way out of the fun house of media manipulation to the beating heart of cultural and social movements, a proposition that has had ongoing influence on subsequent communication research including that of educomunicación.

Both Orozco and Couldry, in another contribution to the 30-year Mediations book, suggest that what Martin-Barbero was saying in the 1980s appears less ground-shaking today, thanks to developments in cultural studies and anthropology that have made the premise of Mediations more commonly shared in Communication research. This was not always the case. Couldry tells the story of sitting in the Oxford University library one morning in the late 1980s and having his eyes opened by Martin-Barbero, who extended ideas that for Couldry were tied up in his readings of Raymond Williams. A turning point was Martin-Barbero’s
commentary of the Peruvian researcher Rosa Maria Alfaro’s use of audio recording to give voice to marginalized women: “As well, we learned that with the help of this gizmo – the tape recorder – we can learn to speak” (Couldry, 2017, p. 112). At the time, much of “media studies” was still engaged in the contestatory space of identifying the subtle forms of resistance to dominant messages and here was a scholar saying we need to speak the language of the media and make our own media. *Mediations* was not only responsive to the times of its publication but prescient about what was to come. As Couldry argues, all of contemporary Communication research presupposes an interest in mediations as central to its orientation: “How else can we make sense of the complexities of our lives through digital and social networks?” (2017, p. 113).

**19.2 Fault Lines – Critical Pedagogy and Popular Education**

While the work of Paulo Freire (1970) is firmly entrenched in academic settings in the North, particularly in Education and also in the social sciences, it is more often understood as a contribution to pedagogy and socio-political analysis than as a theory of Communication. Freire’s insistence that pedagogy should be an act of dialogue that has a transformative outcome in the development of critical consciousness informs Education theories widely in both formal and popular domains. Among the many impacts of the work of Paulo Freire is its legacy as method and inspiration to Latin American traditions of “popular education,” innovative and alternative education practices and programs that address and redress social inequality and alienation and are practiced largely outside of school walls in community spaces, workplaces and through the media. Popular education is widely recognized as a Latin American contribution, a branch of adult education inspired by social justice concerns and animated by creative techniques. Popular education is of “the people” and thus responds to and contrasts to officially sanctioned curricula of state school systems. Wide ranging and multi-faceted, it may include anything from using broad aesthetic and cultural practices such as the community “forum theatre” method of Augusto Boal (1993) in order to interrogate contemporary social and political themes, to engaging small-scale community-based dialogic processes such as a woman’s group discussing safety or a worker’s collective seeking community input on rights and obligations. Drawn from the work of Augusto Boal and practiced extensively in the global North, forum theatre combines popular education methods, Freirian dialogic approaches and a focus on transformative political insights and outcomes.

Popular education in Latin America also includes *mediations*, the innovative analysis and production of media, and Freire’s work informs Latin American communication theories and paradigms including in the
field of *educomunicación*. *Educomunicación* is a sub-domain of theory and practice that intersects between Media Studies, Journalism and Communications, on the one hand, and Education, on the other. While there is considerable overlap with Anglosphere traditions of media literacy, there are also distinctions that mark the field: for example, the centrality of the 1930s work of French educator Celestin Freinet, the contribution of Canadian journalist and educator Jean Cloutier and the articulation of the various components in *A Pedagogy of Communication* by Mario Kaplún (Apirici, 2010). In short, Freinet brought a printing press into his 1930s classroom and transformed it into a newsroom, engaging the students as knowledge-seekers, knowledge-producers and knowledge-distributors (Freinet, 1963; Peyronie, 2001). Cloutier introduces the term *emirec* to describe a dual relation to media on the part of the individual, both as emitter and receptor (producer and receiver of information) (Apirici & García-Marín, 2018). These active models of media engagement are combined with dialogism to create a dynamic vision of media engagement. What the Freirian dialogism, popular education and *educomunicación* all have in common are a recognition that all genuine communication is bi-directional, that learning takes places in unexpected ways and from unexpected sources, that communication should lead to enhanced awareness or critical consciousness and that critical consciousness should enable change at the level of both the individual and the social sector. These insights are embedded too in *educomunicación*, but that history is little known in the North.

Another key source of inspiration for popular education in Latin America is the fluid dynamic of cultural syncretism and the movement of resources between high and low culture in what Nestor García Canclini refers to as hybrid cultures (1990) and the practice of “cultural reconversion” (1992). Says García Canclini:

> In Latin American countries, where numerous traditions coexist with varying degrees of modernity, and where sociocultural heterogeneity presents a multiplicity of simultaneous patrimonies, this process of interchange and reutilization is even more intense. High, popular, and mass art nourish each other reciprocally. (1992, p. 32)

A foil to overly enthusiastic take-ups of the emancipatory potential of popular education, Canclini warns that cultural hybridity does not resolve hierarchies, injustices and stubborn belief systems. He argues that there are no easy fixes to cultural dispossession “by means of the socialization of hegemonic cultural assets through education, mass dissemination... and new global technologies of communication,” none of which guarantee “emancipation” from “localistic or nationalistic fundamentalisms” (García Canclini, 1992, pp. 32–33). The problematic social and
polITICAL FOUNDATION OF MANY LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES THROUGH THESE YEARS ADDS AN ACUTE DIMENSION OF STRUGGLE THAT CONTRASTS THE WORK FROM THE GLOBAL NORTH. STATES MARTIN-BARBERO (1993):

ALTHOUGH THE CRISIS IN LATIN AMERICA IS LINKED MORE TO THE DEBT – AND THUS TO THE CONTRADICTIONS OF THE MODERNIZATION DESIGNED BY BUSINESS PEOPLE AND POLITICIANS – THAN TO THE DOUBT OVER MODERNITY SUFFERED BY INTELLECTUALS, PHILOSOPHERS AND SOCIAL SCIENTISTS IN EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES, THE CRISIS ARE INTERTWINED AND THEIR DISCOURSES ARE MUTUALLY COMPLEMENTARY.

(p. 47)

LATIN AMERICAN INTELLECTUALS HAVE PRACTICED THEIR WORK IN CONDITIONS OF PRECARITY OVER THESE YEARS, CONFRONTING YAWNING CHASMS OF SOCIAL INEQUALITY AND ALSO THE BRUTE FORCE OF MILITARIZED STATE APPARATUSES INTENT ON ELIMINATING SUBVERSION AND DISSIDENCE. WHILE DISCOURSES OF EDUCOMUNICACIÓN THRIVE ON DIALOGISM, PARTICIPATION AND POPULAR EDUCATION, RESOURCES ARE SCARCE IN MANY EDUCATION SYSTEMS, CONDITIONS OF POVERTY MITIGATE AGAINST FULL PARTICIPATION, AND POLITICAL INSTABILITY CAN MAKE CRITICAL PEDAGOGY AND EDUCOMUNICACIÓN HAZARDOUS FOR BOTH LEARNERS AND PEDAGOGUES.


IN CONTRAST, EDUCOMUNICACIÓN IS ITSELF BORN OF NORTH-SOUTH AND SOUTH-NORTH DIALOGUES. IT IS NOT A NATIVIST TRADITION, BUT RATHER DRIVES ON MULTIPLE, HYBRID SOURCES THAT INCLUDE KEY AUTHORS FROM THE GLOBAL NORTH. FOR EXAMPLE, JESÚS MARTÍN-BARBERO CITES BENJAMIN, BARTHES, BAUDRILLARD, BAKHTIN, WILLIAMS AND MANY OTHERS. MARIO KAPLÚN (1998) REFERENCES BRUNER, PIAGET, VYGOTSKY, PIERCE AND OTHERS. PAULO FREIRE CITES AMONG OTHERS LUKÁCS, LENIN, BUBER AND ALTHUSSER. LATIN AMERICAN SCHOLARS HAVE ALWAYS WORKED AT THE CROSSROADS OF SCHOLARLY TRADITIONS. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF REGIONAL DYNAMICS AT PLAY, AS THE CHAPTERS IN THE
first section of this book amply demonstrate, and there is also some pan-
Americanism as well as Ibero-American moments in the articulation of
ideas and movements, but there is a general openness to scholarly work
from Europe, North America and elsewhere in the world. The collection
of chapters in this book opens up new vistas for scholars from other
parts of the world to learn more about the nuanced differences between
media literacy and *educomunicación*. This recognition by an important
Anglo-Saxon publishing house is welcome, albeit overdue.

Notes

1 Unless indicated in bibliography, all in-text translations are by author.
2 Published in the Media Literacy Resource Guide, Intermediate and Senior
Divisions, a groundbreaking official curriculum implemented by the Govern-
ment of Ontario (1989), the eight key concepts include: all media are con-
structions; the media construct reality; audiences negotiate meaning in media;
media have commercial implications; media contain ideological and value
messages; media have social and political implications; form and content are
closely related in the media; each medium has a unique aesthetic form.

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