



Media Literacy Education Practices

**Prosumer teachers for the development of media competency
in the Spanish population**

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Abstract. In the past few decades, different initiatives have been underway in Europe to promote media literacy of the citizenry. The conceptualization of media competency, the need to boost media education of the faculty and the systematic integration of this competency into the curriculum are fundamental aspects for this. This article poses the importance of adequate training of the teaching staff as prosumers.

Keywords: media education, media literacy, media competence, teacher's training, citizens

Introduction

Media education is necessary in the training of the citizenry in light of the ever more complex experience of co-habiting in a media-saturated communicative context. The European institutions have worked for years on the design of a common framework of the *levels of media literacy* in each member State (Study on the current trends and approaches on Media Literacy in Europe, 2007; Study on Assessment Criteria for Media Literacy Levels, 2009; Testing and Refining Criteria to Assess Media Literacy Levels in Europe, 2011 and Assessing Media Literacy Level and the European Commission. Pilot Initiative, 2015). In Spain, in accordance to these initiatives, research that has analysed and evaluated the level of media competency in different spheres has been developed: in non-university teaching -students from preschool, primary, secondary and baccalaureate levels-, as well as the staff and families; university teaching -faculties of journalism, audio-

visual communication and marketing, pedagogy, psychopedagogy, teaching schools; as well as Communication professionals¹.

The conclusion of the study revealed the need to re-inforce and improve the levels of media competency of the Spanish population. This need was already evidenced by Pérez-Tornero and Tayie (2012) referencing the fact that the World Summits on the Information Society (Geneva, 2002, and Tunisia, 2005) pointed to media and information literacy as being crucial. The research also contributed results on the need to integrate the Internet, the ICTs and the new communication media into the classrooms. In this sense, the competencies of the students and the faculty in this sphere are crucial for coherent literacy. As Hobbs (2010) has emphasised, «there is growing momentum to support the integration of digital and media literacy into education». Given that most of the educational systems already include this training, it is of vital importance to consider that the «training of the faculty in media and information literacy material will be a burning challenge in the world's educational system» (Pérez-Tornero and Tayie, 2012). In 2011, the UNESCO introduced the MIL (Media and Information Literacy) curriculum for the faculty, with the aim of developing competencies and strategies in the teaching staff for a better understanding of the role of the media and information and communication technologies in their communication processes.

Once the dichotomy between education with media and media education and digital instrumentation, the research we have performed sets us within the type of context where the media and technology become interesting not only due to their reception, but for their creative use. Faculty and students can already become producers, creators and communicators (Pérez-Tornero and Tayie, 2012), in this liquid atmosphere that Area and Ribeiro (2012) have described as «a universal library, a global market, a gigantic puzzle of informational pieces that are hypertextually connected, a public plaza for the meeting and communication of people that are part of social communities». Therefore, the citizenry will acquire a series of competencies that will allow them to not only consume media and audio-visual resources, but to also produce and create messages and creative content in a critical and responsible manner.

Media competency. Dimensions for its comprehension

Media competency is the result, as anticipated, of the convergence of the audio-visual concepts, communication media competency, digital competency, informational competency, and audiovisual competency, among others (Grizzle, 2011; Pérez-Rodríguez & Delgado-Ponce, 2012; Pérez-Tornero, J.M. & Martínez-Cerdá, 2011). The term *Media and Information Literacy* was put forward by the

¹«La competencia en comunicación audiovisual en un entorno digital. Diagnóstico de necesidades en tres ámbitos sociales». Investigación realizada por investigadores de las Universidades Pompeu Fabra, Valladolid y Huelva. Para más información: www.competenciamediatica.es/.

UNESCO in 2008, and the European Commission (2007, 2009) defined it as the ability to access, analyze and evaluate the power of images, sounds and messages that are produced in daily life, and that are an important part of contemporary culture, as well as the ability to communicate in a competent manner by using the means within our reach. All the types of media are included in the term media (television, films, radio, music, press, Internet and every other type of digital technologies). This “media” concept unites a holistic and contextualized vision of what is to be learned as related to the term «competency», together with the convergence of that related to the digital and the audio-visual. It caters then, not only to the technological advances, but to the classic communication media as well. Therefore, it would encompass the denominated audio-visual competence, which is centred on the knowledge, abilities and attitudes related to mass communication media and audio-visual language, and the digital competency, defined as the ability of searching, processing, communicating, creating and disseminating through the use of technologies.

The development and acquisition of media competency requires the systematization of knowledge, abilities and attitudes implicated in their development, so that the description of the dimensions and the indicators that allow for the establishment of didactic approaches, in order to address an adequate literacy, are indispensable. In this sense, there have been much research that by following different guidelines, have tried to define the field (Bazalgette, 1995; Buckingham, 2010, Buckingham, Banaji, Carr, Cranmer, S. & Willett, 2005; Celot, 2015; Celot & Pérez-Tornero, 2009; Fedorov & Levitskaya, 2015; Ferrés y Piscitelli, 2012; Frau-Miegs & Torret, 2009; Hobbs, 2010; Moeller, Joseph, Lau & Carbo, 2011; Pérez-Tornero & Martínez Cerdá, 2011; Potter, 2010), emphasizing abilities such as comprehension, criticism, creativity, adjusted consumption, citizenship and inter-cultural communication. Pérez-Rodríguez y Delgado-Ponce (2012) believe that the development of media competence should include knowledge on media policy and industry, production processes, technology, language and the access and gathering of information; comprehension, defined as reception and comprehension and ideology and values; and lastly, expression: communication, creation and citizen participation.

Media education in the Spanish educational context

The Spanish educational system is structured in diverse stages: Preschool, until the age of six; Primary School, ages 6 to 12; Secondary School, from ages 12 to 16; Baccalaureate and Vocational Training, from 16 to 18 years old, and University. Compulsory education is from the age of 6 to 16, with the Baccalaureate and Vocational training being optional. Within compulsory education and Baccalaureate, a series of key competencies have been established that will allow the youths, once their schooling is finished, to develop attitudes,

values, skills and abilities that are adapted to the society of information and knowledge (Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport, 2015). In the same manner, at university, within the European Higher Education Area as well as in vocational training, competencies are included in all the study plans (Tiana, Moya & Luengo, 2011), that try to facilitate the application of the knowledge to different situations and contexts throughout a lifetime.

Compulsory education takes into account media education among the pedagogic principles of the different educational states, in relation with the key competency of «processing of information and digital competency», with the intention that the students make creative, critical and safe use of the media and information and communication technologies, developing an active, ethical and responsible attitude. However, the implementation of diverse didactic strategies that allow for the accomplishment of this competency in the classroom has been reduced to a more technological and equipment-related treatment, more than media. The Spanish children and youths use diverse digital tools, communicate and share through the internet, but lack sufficient preparation that will lead to critical, responsible and creative use of them (García-Ruiz, Ramírez and Rodríguez-Rosell, 2014).

In the case of preschool, the «Development of communicative abilities in different languages and forms of expression» has been proposed as a general objective, including «the audio-visual language and information and communication technologies», taking into account that they are present in the preschooler's life and «require educational treatment that, when appropriately used, will start the children in the comprehension of audio-visual messages and their adequate use». Primary School plans, among its general objectives, to «Initiate (the children) in the utilization, for learning, of the Information and Communication Technologies for the development of a critical spirit in light of the messages that are received and elaborated». Thus, «the students should be initiated on the use of Information and Communication Technologies, to find information and to process and present it», and that «they (the technologies) should be used as resources for the learning of curricular materials, to obtain information and as instruments to learn, get to know and use key words and concepts needed to be able to read, write and talk»... In Secondary School, the general objectives specify the use of information sources and training in the field of technology, promoting that the student body be able to comprehend, interpret and critically value information. This is performed in a partial and segmented manner, making difficult a complete and adequate view in agreement with the concept of media competency as described above.

The treatment of media education in the different educational stages is unequal, and is neither sufficient nor comparable with the presence and influence

of the media and information and communication technologies in all the different spheres in our life (Aguaded and Delgado-Ponce, 2012). Aspects such as attention to emotion, influence of the media and citizen participation are barely addressed, even though they are important for the efficient incorporation of the youths into present society, giving more importance to the equipment instead of orientation on the critical use or as medium of expression.

The training of the faculty in this area would benefit the development of media competency at all levels, as important deficiencies have been identified (Ferrés, Masanet and Blanco, 2014; González, Gozávez and Ramírez, 2015).

The UNESCO (2011) has established the Curriculum for Teachers with the aim of developing their media literacy. The curriculum aims to help the faculty acquire knowledge and skills related to the role of the media and information in democracy, comprehension and use of media content, the access to information in an effective and efficient manner, the critical evaluation of the information and its sources, the use of new formats, the socio-cultural context of the media content, the promoting of media literacy among their students.

As pointed by Wilson (2012, 22-23), «The fact that media and information literacy programs have largely remained outside of teacher education and training programs at the same time as the media and information sources have come to dominate so many aspects of teachers' and students' lives, speaks to the challenges of moving teacher education into the present, and positioning it to embrace the future».

In this conceptual framework, the faculty has to be trained to:

- Define adequate strategies for comprehending the potentialities of incorporating media and information literacy into the curriculum.
- Utilize media and technologies to access information and acquire knowledge on the subjects and pedagogic focus that could strengthen their own professional development, selecting and evaluating adequate resources, and reaching different audiences from a critical point of view.
- Understand how the students relate to and with the media and evaluate their comprehension of media literacy, developing different didactic strategies that could promote media competency in the teaching and learning process.

Training the teaching staff on media competency: approaches for action

As the conclusion, and following the contributions of Fedorov (2014) regarding the existing media literacy educational models, we coincide on the need to focus the training of the faculty in five levels of development: Personal motivation for improving media competency in all its dimensions; Information and broad knowledge on what implies being competent at the media level; Adequate teaching methods; Diverse activities, consistent with and adapted to the context of

teaching and learning; Creativity in each didactic proposal with an original process and adequate aesthetic.

The acquisition of these knowledge and necessary abilities will allow for the creation of an efficient prosumer teacher profile that will promote, through the use of pedagogy, the development of media competency. This profile could be the following:

Proposal: Training of the prosumer teacher

	The teacher as an efficient prosumer
P	PRODUCER of new content or a selector of existing content that favors the teaching-learning processes.
R	REVIEWER of didactic material and content that are used in the classroom, from a critical, thoughtful and pluralistic point of view.
O	OBSERVER of the process of production and emission of the content that he/she facilitates and transmits to the student body as well as its impact, taking into account its characteristics, needs and preferences.
S	SENSITIVE TO AND CONCERNED WITH identifying of stereotypes, bad practices, abuses and lack of truth of some messages and didactic content that are distributed through communication media and didactic material.
U	USER OF the technological tools which are adapted to the new communication media and to the characteristics of the new messages and media products.
M	MAKER OF quality, equality, inclusion and diffusion criteria of the resources that he/she elaborates for the learning of the content, attitudes and values established for the teaching session.
E	ENGAGED WITH THE PROCESS OF EFFICIENT AND RESPONSIBLE INTERACTION of the children and youth through the use of media, social networks, and technologies by taking responsibility in caring for the technological, artistic, ethical and moral quality of the final product when creating new messages and content.
R	RESPONSIBLE OF THE ORGANISATION and teaching resources needed for the production of creative, critical and responsible content, favoring democratic participation.

Along these lines, media literacy is the link that gives sense to the configuration of a new prosumer citizenry (Gozálvez, 2013), who are educated in the concept of media competency. The undertaking of reforms of the faculty's initial and permanent training plans is evidently needed, and is an important challenge for the professional responsibility of the teaching staff in light of the current technological and media development. The processes of teaching and learning, in accordance to the new educational context, demand the incorporation of knowledge, abilities, strategies and focus in relation to the ways of communication and of sharing information that are found in the communicative processes of the student body.

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