IS MEDIA LITERACY AN URGENT ISSUE IN EDUCATION FOR ALL?

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Today it is possible to consider that the new technologies can offer many possibilities to be explored. There is no doubt about the changes in society when it is adequately supported by the new technologies. In fact, people from all over the world used to have high hopes that new technologies will be able to improve and promote healthier life, as well they also expect a huge impulse to promoting social freedoms, and at least to increase knowledge and more productive livelihoods.

But for this scenario become true the traditional education goals should change to a different direction to gaining locally relevant goals and skills. In order to establish networks for all kind of partnerships, the new technologies could be used as the means for providing an access to and engaging in the lifelong learning programs all social groups of population around the world.

Many advantages of using new technologies were pointed out in different educational research but also there are several barriers to the successful integration of these technologies in teaching and learning classes (Bingimlas, 2009). The researcher highlighted that "*While new technologies can help teachers enhance their pedagogical practice, they can also assist students in their learning.*" (p. 236).

The widespread of these new technologies into educational settings would require serious changes, like the elaboration of new ethical, psychological, legal and moral aspects of applying such technologies to learning according to the new context. If on the one hand these technologies offer wonderful opportunities to reach out to our fellow human beings, we cannot forget the other side like the darker side of human nature that could find opportunities, too.

Nowadays, it is possible to find much information about the use of these technologies by violent organizations to recruit and radicalize young minds to extremist, to child soldiers, to promote hate speech. Unfortunately, the digitalization of media production had been used to increase the conflict between values and standards exposed by different cultures by internet network.

It is necessary to remember the article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, "*All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood*".

Taking it into account, is media literacy an urgent issue for education for all?

Actually, we are living in a world where media looks like omnipresent. If we consider the increasing number of people that spend a great deal of time watching television, reading newspapers and magazines, playing records and listening to the radio. In some cases, in some countries for example children already spend more time watching television than they do attending school.

Is it now enough? So, please consider that rather than condemn or endorse the undoubted power of the media, we need to accept their significant impact and penetration throughout the world as an established fact, and also appreciate their importance as an element of culture in today's world.

At least, it is reasonable to guess that media education should be most effective when parents, teachers, media personnel and decision-makers all acknowledge that they have a role to

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play in developing greater critical awareness among listeners, viewers and readers. Consequently, the wide integration of educational and communication systems would undoubtedly be an important step towards more effective education for all.

In this sense, media literacy is recognized as an essential area to promote critical view for citizens in the boarder of education and communication. It is clear that when we claim for a peaceful world it is necessary to promote a democratic society where citizens should be able to consume critically the mass media but also to express themselves by this media as producers. In this scenario media literacy is an important part of education for this democratic and peaceful society, and it should not be denied (UNESCO, 2010).

> "Media literacy is the capacity to access, analyze and evaluate the power of the images, sounds and messages with which we are faced every day and which play an important role in contemporary culture. It includes the individual capacity to communicate using the media competently (UNESCO, 2010, p. 5)."

Another important consideration is reported in the article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It states that

> 'Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.'

Media literacy could be able to prepare citizens for many competencies that are needed to promote the individual's right to communicate and express, and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of this fundamental human right.

These competencies should equip different social groups to create and defend their own counterbalance to face dominant cultures when they would be able to share their stories with people in different ways, promote discussion and creative engagement in order to protect cultural diversity, multilingualism and pluralism for all.

Since 1982 when representatives of 19 nations met at UNESCO's International Symposium on Media Education at Grunwald in Germany, they stated four guidelines that remain valid until today in 2017:

1. Development of comprehensive media education programs at all education levels.
2. Teacher training and awareness raising of the other stakeholders in the social sphere.
3. Research and its dissemination networks.
4. International cooperation in actions.

It is clear the need to develop educational programs for teachers, to increase their knowledge and understanding of the media and education relationship, to prepare them in appropriate methodologies in order for the citizens understand the deeper significance of information, media and being informed, and also to assist people in using information in a more efficient way, preserving the critical and ethical aspects.

The integration of media literacy into education could encourage critical thinking and freedom of expression promoting gender equality, social justice and civic participation in a democratic society.

Taking into account, media literacy should be considered an important issue in education to advocate and defend freedom of expression for all!

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