Challenges and problems: the introduction of media education in secondary schools

Retos y problemáticas de la introducción de la educación mediática en los centros de secundaria


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Abstract

This article analyzes the state of media education in Catalonia’s secondary schools. The starting point is a bibliographic compilation that works as a theoretical framework and points out the links between education and communication. The main goal is to offer an approximation to the general perception about the role that media education plays in secondary schools. The article highlights the main challenges and problems related to the introduction of media and ICT in classrooms as something more than a mere educational tool. Three different qualitative methods were designed and implemented in order to obtain the results: twelve in-depth interviews conducted with researchers, twelve in-depth interviews conducted with secondary school principals and audiovisual coordinators, and seven focus groups organized with forty-two students from the seven schools collaborating in this research. The results show that media education is still difficult to find as a practice in secondary schools. Researchers and secondary school teachers find media education as ‘transversal content’ the best strategy to introduce media and ICT in classrooms. However, the transversal strategy is also a difficult one, and for this reason media education is usually implemented as a subject. The results also show how voluntary teachers play an essential role in media education projects and therefore, how difficult it is to find media literacy experiences in secondary schools. Finally, the article highlights how media education can play an important role in the renewal of educational practices.
**Keywords:** Media education, communicative competence, young people, ICT, school projects 2.0, secondary education, teachers, students, secondary school curriculum.

**Resumen:**
En este artículo se analiza la implementación de la educación mediática en los centros de secundaria de Cataluña. Partiendo de un marco teórico inclusivo, se pone el acento en las conexiones necesarias entre educación y comunicación. El principal objetivo es ofrecer una aproximación a la percepción del papel de la educación mediática en la secundaria obligatoria, poniendo de manifiesto los principales retos y problemáticas de la introducción de los medios y las Tecnologías de la Información y la Comunicación (TIC) en las aulas como algo más que meros soportes o instrumentos educativos. Para ello, se ha realizado una investigación cualitativa sustentada en tres ejes: la percepción de los expertos, la percepción de directores y profesores implicados en su implementación, y por último, la percepción del alumnado. Se han realizado entrevistas en profundidad a doce expertos en esta temática, entrevistas a doce directores y responsables de proyectos audiovisuales y finalmente, siete grupos de discusión con cuarenta y dos alumnos de una muestra intencional de siete centros pioneros en la introducción y desarrollo del trabajo en medios y con medios en las aulas. Los resultados que se desprenden de esta investigación ponen de manifiesto una asignatura pendiente. En este sentido, expertos y docentes apuntan la transversalidad como una excelente estrategia para su introducción en las aulas; sin embargo, y debido a su difícil implementación, a menudo se introduce exclusivamente como asignatura. Los resultados también ponen de manifiesto que la educación mediática sigue siendo una práctica voluntarista y, por consiguiente, minoritaria en la Educación Secundaria Obligatoria (ESO). Finalmente, se constata la necesidad de situar la educación mediática al servicio de un cambio de enfoques y metodologías; promoviendo una concepción de la educación menos transmisiva y más comunicativa.

**Palabras clave:** educación mediática, competencia comunicativa, jóvenes, TIC, escuela 2.0, educación secundaria, profesorado, estudiantes, currículo de educación secundaria.

**Introduction: the current state of media education**

Studying the relationship between society and communication is of greater importance than ever. We live in times of crisis; in a runaway
world, according to Giddens (2000); in a world undergoing total transformation. It might be said that we are witnessing a cultural and communicational paradigm shift in which the digital revolution plays a relevant role. Castells (2006) calls the resulting society the net society; other authors prefer the term mediatized society (De Moraes et ál., 2007). In this new context, the media are considered important socio-educational agents. The importance of the media and technological developments applied to communicative processes is evident in the constant redefinitions of social and learning spaces.

The relationship between education, the media and society is, however, problematic and ill-defined; perhaps even paradoxical. Although school curricula have been adapted in an attempt to deal with the social changes resulting from the boom in ICTs and the media, it is surprising that the latter have not been given priority in compulsory education. Over the last few decades, some authors have attempted to consolidate a new discipline which might feasibly be introduced in schools. More specifically, the last two decades have seen theoretical justification of the need to establish an area of study which connects the areas of communication and education (Masterman, 1993; Jacquinot, 1999; Pérez Tornero, 2005; Mominó, Sigalés and Meneses, 2008; Aparici, Campuzano, Ferrés and García Matilla, 2010; Aguaded, 2011; Ferrés and Piscitelli, 2012; Ballano, 2012). It is even more surprising given that the ongoing development of ICTs, and the expansion and growing prominence of the media based on them, has further increased their use and social interest. At the same time, there has been much debate about the existence of new strategies and contexts for education and the identification of new dimensions or literacies in education.

However, the diversity of the different approaches (some more technological, others more communicative), coupled with criticism of already saturated school curricula, have weakened the case for what some authors have defined as a necessary media education. In parallel, the economic crisis in Spain has paralyzed many of the existing initiatives, which required funding from the administration and schools. In turn, concepts such as ‘digital natives’ (Prensky, 2001) and ‘net generation’ (Tapscott, 1998) have revealed a certain cultural gap, generational in nature, which appears to place young people ahead of the adult population in terms of the so-called ‘new literacies’. In some cases, this has served to undermine the need to study the media and ITCs in the
classroom. However, on this point, researchers are practically unanimous in the view that native is not synonymous with fully competent and that, while there are certain skills that young people acquire intuitively, adult guidance is necessary for reflection and distance.

It is thus apparent that the relationship between education and communication is not without stereotypes and myths. On many occasions, technological development has been considered a possible solution to problems in education, with the technologization of education being prioritized over the necessary redefining of educational practice, contexts and dimensions. Authors such as Jacquinot (1999) have conceptualized this as a supposed “audiovisual solution” to a crisis which does not only affect the education system, but society as a whole. Similarly, for Buckingham (2002), technology has become on countless occasions a “magic promise” for education; an alleged solution to all the problems in the current school system. However, at this stage it seems evident that incorporating technology into schools is insufficient to deal with the challenges facing education; on the contrary, the solution seems to lie in debating and rethinking the ‘whys’ and ‘what-fors’ of education and communication within the framework of the processes of change and transformation (of crisis, in fact) which we are facing. In today’s society, where networks and the media play such prominent roles (Castells, 2009), the acquisition of communicative and media competencies is undoubtedly essential for the consolidation of active, participative citizens. As a result, this article takes as a starting point a broad conception of media education; under the assumption that if education becomes a permanent process which can be generated in multiple contexts, if children and young people become active and creative in their learning processes, and if the new social network sites do indeed establish themselves as new learning networks (Siemens and Weller, 2011) and join that ‘parallel school’ already identified in the 1970s, then it is undoubtedly necessary to question the function of formal education today and what it means to establish a curriculum which takes into consideration media literacy. This conception of media education or literacy takes into account a necessary balance between the classic divide between educating in media and educating with media, while considering that the priorities should lie in students’ communicative competencies, as well as in the processes of appropriation, (re)creation of meaning and creation with media, affecting the relational nature of our uses and appropriations (Gabelas, Marta and
At present, the role of the media and the introduction of ICTs in compulsory formal education continue to pose a series of unresolved challenges and problems. This article will attempt to synthesize some of the main areas of debate about this object of study, and will do so based on the results of a combination of qualitative research tools.

Aims and methodology, techniques and sample for carrying out the field work

The aim of this article is to offer an analysis of the current perception of the role of media education in compulsory secondary education, while highlighting the main challenges and problems involved in introducing the media and ICTs as more than mere educational aids or tools in the classroom. Our particular interest concerns four principal groups we consider to play a highly relevant role in the success of media education practices in the classroom: researchers, school principals, teachers or coordinators of audiovisual projects, and the pupils themselves.

More specifically, we aim to analyze their perception of five aspects of debate related to the role of media education in compulsory secondary education: first of all, its conception as either a transversal competency or as a subject in its own right; secondly, whether it is conceptualized as a legal obligation or else as a voluntary practice in certain centers; thirdly, the impact of media education on the supposed generational (and digital) divide between digital natives and digital immigrants; fourthly, the role of 2.0 school projects in implementing media education experiences; and finally, the role of media education itself in fostering changes in methodology and a renewed educational praxis. These aims and aspects of study are tackled by means of the methodological combination of different qualitative techniques which offer a broad, comprehensive view of the current situation regarding the introduction of the media and ICTs in secondary schools. Experts in media education, team managers in schools, and teachers and students who form part of media education projects have all participated in this study. Consequently, they represent a “purposive sample” who may act as a vanguard or as a model of “good
practice” in strategies for incorporating media education in the school curriculum. In order to carry out the research, a methodology combining indirect and direct analysis was designed. The study was carried out in two phases: an initial phase in which documentation and bibliographical references related to the object of study were compiled, and an advanced phase in which focus groups and in-depth interviews were conducted. It should be pointed out that this work was carried out within a wider research framework (Ballano, 2012). In addition, we were able to compare, validate and broaden the results by means of participating in two R+D+i research projects: The use of ICTs and the digital divide between adults and teenagers (2010-2012), and Childhood, violence and television (2006-08).

TABLE I. Direct analysis: Research tools adopted

| (E01) 4 exploratory interviews: Researchers specialized in qualitative research tools: Dr. Josep Lluís Sánchez (Infonomía, 23 October 2009); Dr. Montserrat Castelló (URL/UAB, 27 October 2009); Dr. Sue Aran (URL/CAC, 30 September/24 November 2009), Dr. Nancy Nelson (University of North Texas, 19 October 2009). |
| (E02) 12 in-depth interviews with experts in media education: Dr. Joan Ferrés, Dr. Jordi Vivancos, Dr. Magda Blanes, Dr. Daniel Aranda, Francesc Llobet, Dr. Guillermo Orozco, Dr. José Antonio Gabelas, Dr. Manuel Area, Dr. Pere Marqués, Dr. Ignacio Aguaded, Dr. Artur Noguerol and Dr. Josep Maria Mominó. |
| (E03) 9 in-depth interviews with coordinators of audiovisual media, technology or computer science in the following schools: Escola Solc (coordinator of audiovisual media), IE Costa Llobera (coordinator of audiovisual media, head of studies), INS Montsuar (coordinator of audiovisual media), INS Sant Just (ICT coordinator, teacher of computer science and technology), Colegio Montserrat (head of communication, ICT coordinator) and INS Carles Vallbona (teacher of media education). |
| (E04) 3 in-depth interviews with the principals of the following schools: Instituto Escuela Costa Llobera, INS Montsuar, Instituto Escuela Jacint Verdaguer. ( |
| FG01) 7 focus groups with school pupils. |

Source: own design
In an initial phase, 12 in-depth interviews were conducted with nationally and internationally renowned researchers in the area of media education. These interviews, together with the analysis of the bibliographical and documentary references related to the object of study, revealed a series of variables which we consider to be central to the implementation of media education in schools (see Table II). This article deals with a selection of these variables, which were also analyzed and discussed in detail with teachers, school principals and pupils.

TABLE II. Selection of the principle challenges and problems in media education:

| 1. Media education implemented as a transversal competency or as a subject |
| 2. The media in the curriculum: legal obligation or voluntary practice |
| 3. Interrelationships between digital "natives" and "immigrants" |
| 4. The meaning and future of Projects 2.0 |
| 5. The media and ICTs to foster a renewed educational praxis |

Source: own design

Subsequently, 12 in-depth interviews were conducted with school principals, heads of study and coordinators of media and ITC projects in schools in Catalonia, as outlined in Table 1. The schools were chosen from a pre-selection of 18 schools considered pioneers in introducing media education in the classroom in compulsory education. The field work was then carried out in 7 of them (three private and four state schools). Finally, we took into account the triangulation of the information obtained through the in-depth interviews with experts, principals and teachers with the perceptions of the pupils, obtained by means of 7 focus groups comprising a total of 42 students in the fourth year of ESO (Compulsory Secondary Education). The focus groups were carried out based on a communicative model which overcomes some of the problems inherent in the classic methodological conception for applying this qualitative research tool (Busquet, Medina and Sort, 2006). In this regard, we started from the premise that the study of the subjective perceptions manifested by the agents involved is fundamental for research in communication (Schütz, 1974; Habermas, 1987).
### TABLE III. Chart of methodology used for accessing and analyzing information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISCOURSE</th>
<th>ACCESS TO INFORMATION</th>
<th>ANALYSIS OF INFORMATION</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expert researchers in Media Education</td>
<td>Reference literature</td>
<td>Qualitative analysis based on categories and dimensions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Individual in-depth interview</td>
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<tr>
<td>Institutional discourse of the schools</td>
<td>Individual questionnaire for the school principal. It includes:</td>
<td>Qualitative analysis based on categories and dimensions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Open questions</td>
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<td>- Selecting from provided answers</td>
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<td>Individual in-depth interview</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher discourse</td>
<td>Individual questionnaire for the teacher. It includes:</td>
<td>Qualitative analysis based on categories and dimensions</td>
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<td>- Open questions</td>
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<td>- Selecting from provided answers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Individual in-depth interview</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student discourse</td>
<td>Individual questionnaire for the student. It includes:</td>
<td>Qualitative analysis based on categories and dimensions</td>
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<td>- Open questions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Selecting from provided answers</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observation and analysis of oral discourse: focus group and group dynamics</td>
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</table>

Source: Adapted from: POZO, Juan Ignacio, SCHEUER, Nora, DEL PUY, María et al, Nuevas formas de pensar la enseñanza y el aprendizaje. Las concepciones de profesores y alumnos, Graó, Barcelona, 2006, p. 379.
Results

Introducing the media and ICTs in secondary school classrooms: transversal competency or subject?

The expert researchers in media education are unanimously in favor of considering media education as a new competency or new literacy need which should be included in compulsory education, rather than be relegated exclusively to other, informal or non-formal, educational contexts.

The interviews conducted with the experts show that there is no consensus regarding whether media education should continue to be considered a transversal competency or whether it should be redefined as a new subject. In fact, different typologies and preferences can be identified regarding the introduction of the media and ICTs in the classroom, most of which lie between adopting a truly cross-curricular approach and introducing them in a complementary way across subjects. However, it is clear that a large majority of the researchers consulted favor their introduction as a transversal competency over the creation of a new subject. On this point, there is a growing tendency to see project-based work as a way of consolidating the cross-curricular approach. Researchers such as Ferrés believe there is a general consensus in the scientific-academic world in favor of the transversal competency approach:

The compartmentalization approach is absurd; all knowledge generated in schools should be far more transversal. Audiovisual communication education is very important and should therefore be present throughout the educational process (in-depth interview conducted on October 1 2009).

Furthermore, a minority of the researchers consulted calls for broadening the scope of the research to enable complementarity strategies to be designed. Researchers such as Aranda and Gabelas point out that both options –the transversal approach and the creation of a subject– are not necessarily in opposition, and they indicate the need for greater flexibility in the area of research which would thus allow methodological innovations to be introduced into educational praxis. For Aranda, the ideal model is one which allows both options to be implemented: a transversal approach, in the case of introducing the media
and ICTs as educational tools or aids; and the design of a specific
curriculum, within a new subject, allowing the media and ICTs to be dealt
with as an object of study in their own right (in-depth interview
conducted in November 2009).

In the seven schools which participated in the field work, the
complementarity strategy advocated by some of the experts consulted is
already in operation. Among the main ways of introducing the media as
an object of study, the following four stand out:

a) Firstly, the design and creation of a succession of optional subjects
throughout ESO, consolidated and undisputed in the school.
b) Secondly, converting optional subjects into compulsory subjects
which guarantee all secondary pupils access to media education.
c) Thirdly, turning fourth year ESO research projects into
communication research projects.
d) Fourthly, the introduction of media education through project
work, within the framework of education systems based on a three-
pronged cooperation approach: teacher-teacher, teacher-pupil and
pupil-pupil.

The search for strategies to introduce the media and ICTs as an object
of study by means of specific spaces (subjects) is therefore emerging as
one of the major trends. The adoption of this strategy is based on the
belief –shared by experts– that a truly cross-curricular approach, such as
project work or competency-based assessment, are among the major
challenges facing education and media education. However, the search
for these concrete, innovative spaces depends, on many occasions, on the
efforts of a single teacher. This indicates a degree of fragility as far as the
introduction of the media and ICTs as an object of study in classrooms is
concerned, due to the mobility and/or work load of the teaching staff.

The pupils who participated in the focus groups perceive that the
introduction of more technology in the classroom does not necessarily
lead to an improvement in teaching-learning processes. In fact, they
report that very often the newly-incorporated technology is not used to
help design and develop new working methodologies. On this point,
students display considerable disagreement with some of the contents of
curricular design in secondary education; they demand a renovation of
the education system which goes beyond the introduction of technology
in the classroom.
One of the main obstacles to introducing the media and ICTs as an instrument and as an object of study in compulsory secondary education is, according to the interviews conducted, the perception that resources provided by publishers are scarce. Consequently, the media education included in cross-curricular classroom projects is very often not guided by textbooks (unlike most contents included in a compulsory education curriculum), but rather by materials selected or even designed by teachers. This aspect encourages a more active role of the teacher and thus of teaching-learning processes as a whole (Tirado y Aguaded, 2014).

Legal obligation or voluntary practice: the media in the curriculum

One of the main difficulties of creating socio-communicative environments which enable media education to be dealt with as a transversal competency in ESO resides in the lack of spaces for dialogue, collaboration and teamwork among teachers working at any one school. Including the media in the curriculum continues to be a question of voluntarism, despite its legal recognition.

The interviews with teachers and principals confirm that it is more common to find spaces devoted to media education in primary education than in ESO. The rigid nature of secondary curricula is perceived as a factor which considerably hinders both allocating media education its own space and introducing it transversally. As a result, it is often the most committed and aware teachers who search for strategies to introduce media education in the classroom.

In the seven schools consulted, the coordinator of audiovisual media normally assumes the role of managing the resources usually linked to instrumental issues (technology maintenance), didactic issues (training and advising teaching staff), and/or communicative issues (coordination of internal and external communication processes by means of creating school magazines, promotional or commemorative videos, managing the school website and attending seminars, conferences and competitions related to media education). At those schools where this is not a recognized function, these tasks are delegated to the teachers of computer science or technology. Some schools have merged the areas of technology, computer studies and audiovisual communication, which are the responsibility of one person: the Coordinator of Learning and
Communication Technologies. Others have opted to set up an ICT Department or a Communication Department, integrated in the school’s organizational structure and responsible for overseeing the way in which ICTs and the media are dealt with as an instrument and as an object of study in the classroom.

**Digital natives and immigrants**

There is a considerable degree of consensus among the researchers consulted that being born in a digital environment does not guarantee full media competence. On the contrary, while certain skills may be acquired intuitively, critical reflection and distance appear to require adult guidance. Nevertheless, despite the relevance of the figure of the teacher as educomunicator, all of the researchers interviewed pointed out the growing cultural gap between young people and adults. While not a new phenomenon, it appears to be increasing due to the generational divide in the appropriation and consumption of technology. The coordinators and principals consulted also acknowledged the existence of a cultural (and digital) gap between teachers and pupils; at the same time they concur with the experts that being a native in a mediatized society is not synonymous with being competent in using, dealing with and reflecting on and about the media. There appears to be a high degree of consensus that one of the principle competencies which pupils lack is the ability to adopt old and new screens as work tools or as objects of study in their own right, and not exclusively as instruments for leisure and socialization purposes.

The focus groups with pupils reveal that active participation in social networks is seen as a waste of time, with the negative repercussions of such participation being measured almost exclusively in terms of the amount of time devoted to it; therefore, from an essentially quantitative rather than qualitative point of view. In fact, only those aspects of media appropriation related to instrumental mastery are considered as factors which might have positive repercussions for their academic or professional future. The possibility that social networks might enhance skills or lead to the acquisition of competencies which might have a favorable influence on their education or future professional life is not generally considered. It is surprising that, even today, these skills which are less instrumental and more communicative are ignored or even
rejected by the students themselves. In this case, we can identify a marked
tendency for young people to interiorize a widespread social discourse,
which they assimilate in an uncritical way: the adult social discourse
regarding the supposed shortcomings of digital leisure.

In addition, practically all the young people consulted consider their
instrumental ability to be much greater than that of the majority of parents
and teachers. They do acknowledge, however, that some adults possess
greater technological knowledge. These tend to be teachers of computer
science, technology and/audiovisual communication, or parents with
studies or jobs related to an intense use of technological tools. Far from
arguing that their abilities are innate or characteristic of a digital
generation, they maintain that what differentiates them from adults is
their intensive use of screens, which facilitates their appropriation and
learning process. In this regard, they point out that not all young people
master technology to the same extent and sustain that competence is
mainly based on the conditions of appropriation and use. There is clear
evidence here of a certain cultural divide which is generational in nature;
however, this divide is very often related to quality and diversity of usage
rather than to access or mastery.

In those schools which prioritize the instrumental dimension of the
media and which have a long tradition of incorporating personal
computers in the classroom, pupils identify shortcomings in teacher
training mainly related to the use of technology in its educational sense
(ability to create wikis, Hot Potatoes, Treasure Hunts, etc). However, in
those schools where critical and thoughtful study of the media is
prioritized, pupils point out that teachers lack basic instrumental training
related to both offline (operation and use of the television and DVD
player) and online (managing e-mail, managing virtual classrooms,
Internet, interactive whiteboard, etc) environments.

In the majority of cases, the pupils claim to have mainly learned to
use technology alone or with a friend; they state that on only very few
occasions do they turn to an adult to answer questions or to acquire
knowledge. Finally, while instant messaging enables them to be
connected to their friends and do homework collaboratively (by sharing
questions or problems, or doing and/or sharing class exercises), social
networks enable them to be in touch with “friends” and “acquaintances”.
Social network sites and chat rooms therefore act as a prolongation of
their offline social interaction processes.
School projects 2.0

The expert researchers consulted display a certain degree of skepticism towards school technologization projects. For the majority, these tend to be implemented more in response to a policy directive than to a rigorously designed proposal for encouraging a change in educational praxis. They agree that the introduction of ICTs in the classrooms usually reproduces the traditional transmission model of education. Some of the researchers interviewed, such as Mominó or Aguaded, remind us that research studies on the repercussion of ICTs in compulsory formal education tend to conclude that they promote a fundamentally superficial use. These researchers point out that quality of use and exploitation of the potential of the technology in the classroom continue to be somewhat uncommon as a general rule. (J.M Mominó, personal interview, 4 May 2011; J.I. Aguaded, personal interview, 19 March 2010) In this regard, all of the researchers consulted agree that the introduction of technology in the classroom should be accompanied by in-depth reflection about the ‘whys’ and ‘what-fors’. There is widespread agreement among school principals and teachers that education 2.0 goes beyond the introduction of computers and digital books in the classroom. They also point to the inertia and routine which typify compulsory formal education (San Fabián, 2011) and the lack of teacher training as two of the principal obstacles to overcoming a model of education which is exclusively transmission-based, linear and unidirectional.

The interviews with principals and audiovisual media coordinators reveal the growing tendency of schools to promote and implement customized training strategies in media and ICTs for teaching staff. This task falls to the coordinator of audiovisual media, and offers an alternative to the more general training courses, both internal and external, offered to the entire teaching staff of a school and which are often considered to be unsuccessful due to the lack of impact on and change in educational processes. However, while teachers and principals agree with the experts that media and ICT training should go beyond its highly instrumental nature, there is no evidence of training strategies in media and ICTs as an object of critical, thoughtful study promoted by and for the teaching staff.

Throughout the school years 2009-10 and 2010-2011, innovation experiences were carried out in six of the seven schools consulted as part of the eduCAT 1x1 project. The eduCAT 1x1 project was launched in the
academic year 2009-2010 with the initial voluntary participation of 70 schools. This project, considered an exclusive pilot test for secondary education, continued over the school year 2010-2011 and expanded to include a total of 616 high schools. In turn, as an initial experiment, the project was launched in 21 primary schools, with the aim of extending the project to include all secondary school pupils and the higher stage of primary education in a period of just four years. Subsequently, the project was redefined within the eduCat 2.0 project, presented on 9 June 2011. However, in reality, while some investment was made during the school year 2011-2012, the project came to a total standstill as a result of the economic crisis. School principals and audiovisual media coordinators cite issues related to image or else an improvement in school infrastructure as key factors for taking part in the project. In addition, they point out five main difficulties in introducing personal computers in the classroom:

1) The lack of training for teaching staff, which endangered the viability of the project in those schools with no prior innovation experience.
2) The lack of foresight and coordination on behalf of the administration to design and implement the technological infrastructure.
3) The lack of coordination and collaboration between the different agents involved to solve problems of a technical nature.
4) The very limited opportunities for involvement, participation and decision-making in the initial stages of the project.
5) Finally, the difficulty of managing pupils’ access to a wide variety of contents designed for leisure purposes, such as games, chat rooms and social networks, in school time.

**The media and ICTs at the service of a renewal of educational praxis**

Among those teachers who argue that introducing the media and ICTs in schools and secondary education classrooms is necessary there is a tendency to advocate a conception of education as a communicative process. On this point, a large majority of the experts consulted consider that traditional education is in crisis or, in other words, that the
A communicative model of education based on transmission is obsolete. Compulsory secondary education is held to be at the core of the problems facing education. There is a tendency to establish parallels between the crisis in society –understood as a process of convulsive change and transformation– and the crisis in schools.

There is widespread consensus among the researchers consulted that the introduction of media and ICTs in the classroom should promote a true education revolution. For many of the experts, this revolution involves implementing models of education which integrate the leisure element into teaching-learning processes; this is only possible if it starts from within schools and is thus supported by the teaching staff. For this reason, the existence of pioneering schools with a certain tradition of including media and ICTs in the classroom in order to bring about a change in methodologies is considered a cornerstone of this revolution.

In the interviews with researchers, teachers and school principals, coordination and collaboration between two of the principle socio-educational agents –family and school– are emphasized as being fundamental aspects of any serious bid to introduce media education in the classroom at the service of a revolution in edu-communicative processes.

Despite the difficulties involved in applying a truly transversal approach, the teachers and principals interviewed agree with the majority of the researchers that the competency-based approach is one of the major opportunities to achieve a real transformation of educational praxis. On this point, absolutely all of the teachers and head teachers interviewed believe that media and ICT education projects should be incorporated into the compulsory secondary education classroom; however, they continue to believe that the recognition and consolidation of these projects depends on the existence of trained staff who are aware of and committed to this new educational need.

In the opinion of pupils, didactic strategies are gradually changing in most of their schools through the introduction of new educational aids. Nonetheless, in only two of the seven schools which participated in our study do pupils perceive a significant transformation of working methodologies in the classroom and of the traditional roles of teachers and students. The majority perceive that the main aim of introducing technology is a renewal (and digitalization) of educational tools for the pupils and teachers of a school, mainly by means of the incorporation of
computers and electronic whiteboards. While they regard the technological innovations in their respective schools in a positive light, they perceive and criticize the fact that the use of technology does not go hand in hand with a greater transformation of teaching-learning processes. There is broad consensus among the pupils consulted that the role of the pupil in the educational process should be renegotiated in order to guarantee that the learning process becomes truly significant. They acknowledge that when the educational process is less transmission-based and more communicative they adopt a more active, cooperative role in class.

Conclusions

**Media literacy poses a major challenge for schools: returning education to its essentially communicative and prospective state**

Media education in the school environment, far from constituting a new burden on the already saturated curricula of compulsory formal education, in fact poses a major challenge: that of defining a new school model which returns education to its communicative essence. This is based on the conviction that the growing importance of the media and ICTs indicates that changes and transformations in society are a point of departure, and not of arrival, for education. The notion of Education 2.0 once again shows that the introduction of media and ICTs in the classroom is not a new requirement for schools, but rather an acknowledgement of the need to specify and redefine the concept of literacy.

This study demonstrates that media education in compulsory secondary education should represent more than introducing technology merely to serve as a teaching aid. In contrast, it means putting education at the service of an understanding of socio-communicative structures and, as a result, connecting education to the study of, reflection on and preparation for the complex transformations taking place in evolving societies. In accordance with what this paper proposes, School 2.0 is not established through the introduction of technology in the classroom; in sharp contrast, it has as its foundation the methodological and
communicative revolution which underpins the instrumental and educational appropriation of technology. And this revolution has yet to arrive.

The introduction of computers in the school context can help renew methodologies and may even encourage a true revolution in educational praxis through redefining the role of teachers and pupils in the educational communicative process. However, it should be reiterated that the use of technology alone does not suppose an improvement in the learning process. It is essential to emphasize the conditions of its appropriation and use within the classroom. At the same time, further progress needs to be made in defining the notion of competency in compulsory education curricula, emphasizing its ability to mobilize learning processes; and proposing, therefore, educational and creative solutions based on the increasing complexity and resignification of contents. It is also necessary to distinguish between methodological competencies, which are mainly related to the technology of the media at the service of the education process, and communicative competencies, concerning dimensions typical of the reflection and appropriation which form part of a necessary digital and media literacy.

One of the major obstacles facing schools and education professionals is the nature of an ESO which is halfway between transmission and communication. This fact is acknowledged and criticized by many of the school principals and teachers who have participated in this study. How to establish space and time to develop not only skills but also contents for media education, when these are not included in assessment processes? How to generate transversal –and at the same time specific–competencies in ESO curricula? And, ultimately, how to promote a less transmission-based and more communicative model of compulsory secondary education when the assessment processes for university access are based more on demonstrating the ability to reproduce contents than on the skills necessary to appropriate, transform and apply them in a wide range of contexts?

This contradiction, inherent in curricula which support competency-based work but which ultimately have to respond to assessment criteria based on specialization in subjects and contents, lies at the root of a dual problematic: on the one hand, the introduction of the media and ICTs as a classroom tool does not result in any significant change in compulsory education in the sense proposed here; on the other hand, as an object of
study in their own right, their dimensions tend to become blurred when introduced into school curricula as transversal content.

Media education: still unresolved in Compulsory Secondary Education

The starting point for the introduction of media education tends to be an innovation developed by a sole teacher committed to this new educational need. When this commitment extends to the whole school, it is a response to a greater aim: to transform not only methodologies but also conceptions about the education process, promoting the active participation of the pupils and demanding a role for the teacher as guide. Research related to schools which are committed to designing and creating concrete spaces for media education is essential in order to progress and rethink the ‘whys’ and ‘what fors’.

The work carried out in the schools which have collaborated in the research seems to confirm that there are two main strategies for introducing the media as an object of study in ESO: the first consists in searching for concrete spaces to do so, accompanied by the design and implementation of a series of subjects linked to media education throughout ESO. This strategy allows schools to work on the instrumental aspect transversally –and thus in all subjects – while ensuring that the media and ICTs are dealt with as an object of critical, thoughtful study by means of creating their own space in the curriculum. The second strategy aims to guarantee that they are dealt with transversally through the design and implementation of interdisciplinary projects based on cooperation between teachers and also between pupils. However, while such projects may occasionally spring from the efforts and disposition of a few teachers, it is more usual that only those schools which have made changes to the essence of classroom work routines –by modifying structures (through a revision and redefinition of timetables and subjects) and infrastructure (turning classrooms into cooperative and deliberative work spaces)– are able to put a transversal program of media education into practice.

It is evident that any strategy employed for implementing and consolidating media education will have to be accompanied by a redefinition of the internal and overall organization of schools. The inclusion of media education in a school environment not only promotes, but also demands, a change in the conception of formal secondary
education. As a result, it can be stated that one of the principal challenges facing School 2.0 is that the existence of media and ICT education frequently depends on the efforts of a few aware and committed teachers. Some of the strategies which may help this internal and general organization are already used and validated by those schools with a certain tradition of introducing the media and ICTs in the classroom; they principally depend on the consolidation of spaces for dialogue, supervision and the promotion of new working methodologies. Ultimately, in addition to a necessary complicity between family and school, it is essential to recognize the active (and decisive) role that young people should adopt in their own learning process.

Bibliography


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