# Mapping Media Education Policies
# in the World

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## Visions, Programmes and Challenges

Mapping Media Education Policies in the World: Visions, Programmes and Challenges

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ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS

# Foreword

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Educators around the world have been championing media education and media literacy for well over two decades, but in most countries policy-makers shaping national education programmes have just recently become aware of the need for media literacy. With this publication the Alliance of Civilizations –in partnership with UNESCO, Grupo Comunicar, and all the contributors– would like to infuse dynamism to the process of normalization which aims to include media education and media literacy in educational curricula across the world.

This foreword is not the occasion for an in-depth narrative explaining the reasons why we think that this is important, necessary and urgent. For well developed answers to these questions, I invite the reader to consult the articles presented –with a global perspective– in this publication. I will simply advance the thought that, in the context of our media saturated societies, media literacy is an indispensable tool for the development of critical thinking skills among young people and across society at large. Some go so far as to link media education and media literacy with the all-encompassing Universal Human Right to education. In the often challenging, confusing and contradictory media environment in which competing political, economic and ideological interests convene and collide, citizens of all ages need new tools that facilitate and ensure their well being as well as their active civic participation.

A truly democratic political system depends on the active participation of its citizens. Active and –most importantly– informed citizens. Media literacy is one of the principal new tools that provide citizens with the skills they need to make sense of the sometimes overwhelming flow of daily media and in particular, new media and

information disseminated through new communication technologies. These forces are reshaping traditional values while transforming them into contemporary new ways of understanding life, society, and culture.

We agree with those who argue that the capacity to provide symbolic resources and tools to make sense of the complexities of everyday life is an essential dimension of media, given that the institutionalized media are key generators that circulate symbols in social life. In today's world, citizens, individuals of all ages and genres, need to develop analytical skills that allow for better intellectual and emotional understanding of the symbolic world produced by new media. Without basic «traditional literacy» (reading, writing and numeracy) a person will often find unsurpassable predicaments that will prevent him or her from genuinely participating in social development and civic engagement in our societies. With the arrival of new electronic media, this basic education must now include new skills, new pedagogical approaches: media literacy.

From this perspective, media literacy emerges not as an option, but as a necessity. It is a basic stepping stone that enables a human being to fully function, as a discerning citizen, in today's world. It is indeed urgent and necessary for policy-makers across the world to be aware of this new paradigm, and of new challenges that are emerging from our information society. While it is true that, today, only about one sixth of humanity has access to the internet, the speed with which new electronic technologies (mobile telephony, wireless internet, satellite television, etc.) are converging is making the call for media education and media literacy relevant to all societies on the planet.

The Alliance of Civilizations recognizes this necessity and supports initiatives focusing on the development of media education. Media literacy has been the focus of one of the first educational initiatives that the Alliance has developed, identifying media education as a fundamental tool that enables individuals to take a critical stance in the face of media messages that encourage violent cultural and religious confrontations. It is well agreed among experts that a «media literate» person is a much more difficult target for media messages infused with cultural fanaticism. In addition to this publication, the Alliance is also implementing other initiatives that are supporting the global development of media education, such as the Clearinghouse on Media Literacy Education[1] and the creation of an UNESCO-AoC Chair on Media Literacy and Cross-Cultural Dialogue[2]. Ultimately, our goal with this publication is to generate a trusted source of reference for policy makers, researchers and educators looking for information on best practices that will encourage the implementation of media education programs in their respective countries and regions.

## Notes

[1] Please visit: www.aocmedialiteracy.org.

[2] This UNESCO/UNITWIN network has been originally created in collaboration with five universities: Autónoma de Barcelona University (Spain), Cairo University (Egypt), Tsinghua University (China), Sao Paulo University (Brazil) and Temple University (USA). It will generate cross-cultural resources and curricula aiming at the development of media literacy programs that take into account cultural and religious differences while encouraging open dialogue, respect and mutual understanding.

# Foreword

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Media education provides the critical knowledge and the analytical tools that empower media audiences to function as autonomous and rational citizens, enabling them to make informed use of the media. Media education, which is an important part of civic education, helps to make people well-informed and responsible citizens, aware of their rights and duties. This publication goes beyond mere definitions of media education to analyze the regulatory and legal environment required for wide-scale media education programmes.

Over the past twenty-six years, UNESCO has been involved in actions to enhance media literacy, particularly within the framework of the Grünwald Declaration of 1982, which recognized the need for political and educational systems to promote citizens' critical understanding of «the phenomena of communication» and their participation in media. The Grünwald Declaration gave birth to the UNESCO Paris Agenda, including twelve recommendations for media education. UNESCO's main strategy in promoting media education consists of awareness-raising regarding its importance at all levels of the education process –primary, secondary, and lifelong education, and in teacher training–, as well as establishing guidelines and promoting policies for curricula development.

Recognizing the need to train teachers in developing countries to integrate media education in the teaching and learning process, UNESCO launched in 2008, a teacher education enrichment project. This included the development of the first model curriculum that merges media literacy and information literacy, both key competencies of knowledge societies, into one discipline, and to facilitate the integration of media and information literacy in the teacher training curricula,. With the rapid growth of ICTs and the resulting convergence of new and traditional media, it is necessary

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that media and information literacy be considered holistically and applied to all forms of media, regardless of their nature and the technologies used.

Further, the appropriate enabling environment fostering free, pluralistic and independent media is a prerequisite for the successful implementation of any media education programme. Media pluralism and independence allow the expression of diverse opinions and ideas, in different languages, representing different groups, in and across societies. Given the influence of the media on human development, peace and democracy, managing a society that upholds diversity, tolerance, transparency, equity and dialogue could be advanced through media education. This integration of media education into national, regional and global development planning also requires careful and purposeful formulation of policies.

This publication brings into sharp focus Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which 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». UNESCO and the UN Alliance of Civilizations hold that media education is essential to empower people all around the world to reap the full benefits of this fundamental right.

«Mapping Media Education Policies in the World», comes at an important juncture when media education is increasingly recognized as an important item on the development and policy agendas in developed, developing and emerging economies.

There are many noteworthy developments which are indicative of a positive trend that attention is turning toward a policy and regulatory framework to guide and support a systematic take-up of media education. More and more counties and even entire regions such as Europe believe that media education is crucial for any society and that «compulsory media education modules» should be incorporated into teacher training for all school levels. Yet many countries are still far behind.

This publication provides answers to key questions for media, communication and education professionals, researchers and policy makers. It considers media education from three inter-related dimensions: media education in the national, regional and global context; the value of media education to citizens and civic participation and how to measure this value, and the crucial role of collaboration among governments, civil society and the private sector in the process.

It is UNESCO's hope that the information and knowledge contained in this collection will inspire readers to take action that is informed by expert knowledge. Each reader can be a catalyst for change and, purpose-driven media education programmes can aid this change.

Let me conclude by commending the UN Alliance of Civilizations for spearheading this publication. I thank all the contributors who have made this intellectual exploration possible. UNESCO is pleased to join hands with UN AoC and other partners to make this important contribution to the growing body of knowledge on media education.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

# Foreword

## A European Approach to Media Literacy: Moving toward an Inclusive Knowledge Society

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Some 50 years ago, 6 European countries (Belgium, France, West Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands) signed the Treaty of Rome[1] creating the European Economic Community. The idea was for people, goods and services to circulate freely across borders. But the real concern was bringing together the nations and people of Europe. We should never forget that the historical roots of the European Union lie in an overwhelming tragedy: the 2nd World War. Europeans decided they would do anything to prevent such killing and destruction from ever happening again. Now the European Union embraces 27 countries from Portugal in the very West of the continent to the new Member States, Romania and Bulgaria, from the polar circle to the coasts of the Mediterranean Sea. Europe has almost half a billion citizens with many different languages, cultures and traditions but also with deeply shared values of democracy, freedom and social justice. The European Union is against any discrimination based on ethnic origin, sex and philosophical belief. In its relations with international partners, the EU projects the values that have contributed to its own success. The prosperity of the EU has grown out of a particular form of regional cooperation, which has developed hand in hand with a deeper political commitment to democracy, human rights and the enhancement of citizenship. Today, we are

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witnessing an unprecedented technological revolution. The meaning of «wealth» has shifted towards ownership of knowledge and information. Technological change makes it possible for virtually all people to become not only consumers but also creators of media content. The media have become an increasingly powerful economic and social force and are accessible instruments for European citizens to better understand the societies in which they live and participate in the democratic life of their community. In this context, at the Lisbon European Council[2] in March 2000, Heads of State and of Government set an ambitious objective for Europe: to become a more competitive knowledge economy and at the same time a more inclusive knowledge society. A higher degree of media literacy would definitely help our societies to fulfil this ambitious objective.

«Media literacy» may be defined as the ability to access the media, to understand and evaluate critically their contents and to create communications in a variety of contexts. This definition is the result of the work of many different people (institutions, media professionals, teachers, educators) and it is built on three main elements: 1) access to media and media content; 2) critical approach, ability to decipher media messages, awareness of how the media work; 3) creativity, communication and production skills. Media literacy relates to «all media», including television and film, radio and recorded music, print media, the Internet and other new digital communication technologies. Media literacy is an extremely important factor for «active citizenship» in today's information society, a real key pre-requisite just as literacy was at the beginning of the twentieth century. It is a fundamental skill not only for the young generation but also for adults (elderly people, parents, teachers and media professionals). As a result of the evolution of media technologies and the presence of the Internet as a distribution channel, an increasing number of Europeans can now create and disseminate images, information and contents. In this context, media literacy is viewed as one of the major tools in the development of citizens' responsibilities. Media literacy relates to the «European audiovisual heritage and cultural identity». The audiovisual production sector is an essential instrument of expression of our cultural and political values. It is a vector for European citizenship and culture and plays a primary role in building a European identity. Media-literate people will be able to exercise more informed choices also with regard to the audiovisual content market. Citizens would therefore have a higher degree of freedom as they will have the instruments to choose what they want to see and will be able to better evaluate the implications of their choices. Finally, media-literate people will be better able to protect themselves and their families from harmful, offensive or undesired content. Media literacy refers also to the skills, knowledge and understanding to enable citizens to use media effectively. It should empower them through critical thinking and creative «problem-solving skills» to make them informed consumers and producers of information.

The Commission adopted a «Communication on media literacy» (A European approach to media literacy in the digital environment) at the end of 2007. The Commission's initiative on media literacy responds to requests by the European Parliament and industry together with a number of Member States. Work started in

2006 with the creation of a Media Literacy Expert Group with an advisory role for the European Commission. A public consultation was held at the end of last year which showed differences in practices and levels of media literacy in Europe. The Communication stresses the importance of media in today's rapidly evolving information society and in citizens' daily life and it adds a further building block to European audiovisual policy. The Communication links to the provisions of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (article 26 introduced a reporting obligation for the Commission on levels of media literacy in all Member States) and the MEDIA 2007 programme which underlines the importance of media literacy and image education initiatives and in particular those organised by festivals for a young public. The Communication provides a European definition of media literacy (as the ability to access the media, to understand and to evaluate critically different aspects of the media and their contents and to create communications in a variety of contexts), which refers to all media and focuses on three main areas: media literacy for commercial communication, media literacy for audiovisual works and media literacy for online. By means of this policy document, the Commission intends to promote the development and exchange of good practices on media literacy in the digital environment through existing programmes and initiatives and to encourage research into criteria for assessing media literacy. The Commission also calls on Member States to encourage the authorities in charge of audiovisual and electronic communication regulation to cooperate in the improvement of the various levels of media literacy and to develop and implement codes of conduct and co-regulatory frameworks in conjunction with all interested parties at national level. Following the publication of the Commission's Communication, the other European Institutions have worked on different kinds of political documents on media literacy. In particular, a set of conclusions was adopted by the Council in May 2008; the Committee of the Region approved an Opinion in October 2008 which urges local authorities to be more active in this domain; and finally the European Parliament adopted a Report on media literacy of high political relevance. In 2009, the Commission will come forward with a Recommendation.

## Notes

[1] www.treatyofrome.com/treaty.htm.

[2] www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/lis1_en.htm.

# INTRODUCTION

# Media Education Policy: Towards a Global Rationale

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The importance of media education is being gradually recognized worldwide. After the time of the lonesome innovators isolated in their classrooms, after the time of extended communities of practice around researchers and field practitioners working at the grassroots level, the moment of policy-makers has arrived. A threshold has been reached, where the body of knowledge concerning media literacy has matured, where the different stakeholders implicated in education, in media and in civil society are aware of the new challenges developed by the so-called «Information Society», and the new learning cultures it requires for the well-being of its citizens, the peaceful development of civic societies, the preservation of native cultures, the growth of sustainable economies and the enrichment of contemporary social diversity.

Globalization is also providing new opportunities for change and for interconnections as the role of overarching governance bodies and Inter-Governmental

Organizations (UNESCO, European Commission, Council of Europe, Alliance of Civilizations, ISESCO, SEGIB, The Arab League, Nordicom's International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media, among others) supports the urgent need for a worldwide, coherent and sustainable development. The ground-breaking Grunwald Declaration (1982), followed by the more recent Alexandria Proclamation on Information Literacy and Lifelong Learning (2005) as well as the Paris Agenda for Media Education (2007) already encapsulate a number of principles and objectives that collectively aim at similar goals. A number of negotiated tools such as UNESCO's Media Education Kit (2007) and UNESCO's current initiative «Training the Trainer on Media and Information Literacy curricula», as well as the Alliance of Civilizations' multi-faceted support of media literacy all point at the feasibility and desirability of the process. They come in the wake of a new international framework towards building «Knowledge Societies». This framework has been elaborated during and after the World Summit on Information Society (2003-05) and the Convention on the Protection and the Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005). These world events have helped, albeit insufficiently, to raise awareness about the role of media, old and new, and enabled a better understanding of Information and Communication processes. There remains the important task of turning high principles into operational applications.

The time for policy-making has thus come, that calls for shared experiences in implementation. Definitions, curriculum development and evaluations no longer are questions of interest for researchers and educators alone: they are defining options for the future and require strategies that can be shared, tested and adopted in a spirit of social change that goes beyond school reform. Regional initiatives already exist, such as the European Commission's communication that recommends all member states to provide national assessments on the level of media literacy of their citizens (2007), the First Conference on Media Education of the Middle East in Saudi Arabia (2007), the International Media Literacy Research Forum (London and Hong Kong, 2008) or the First Africa Media Literacy Conference in Nigeria (2008).

It is therefore timely and necessary to consider the policy frameworks that are shaping the sector and influencing its content and social impact. The purpose of the experiences assembled in this collection is to map some of the most relevant practices that exist at regional level and to highlight the underlying educational and media cultures that support them. It is hoped that such a process can serve as a diagnostic tool and an inspirational guide to implement and evaluate policy in countries that would want to establish their own framework. It can help decision-makers, educators, media professionals, researchers, and activists to activate reforms responding to the social need for media education among nations around the world.

Within this global context, the contributors in this mapping project aim at revealing the articulations between the different spheres of society and the different actors of media education, as well as the interactions among them, in the development of contemporary Knowledge Societies. They go beyond the description of programmes and take into consideration issues, challenges and outcomes, pointing towards solution-

oriented recommendations and open initiatives. The contributions transcend the case-studies or the examples of common-sense practices in order to offer interpretive perspectives on three transversal themes: the relation between the local and the global in media education strategies and policies, the public interest value of media education and the benefits of multi-partnership involvements and implementations. While the scope of this report is global, obviously, not all media education programmes at regional or national level could be profiled in it. Countries such as Austria, New Zealand or Australia, for example, where solid programmes on media education are being developed by their respective goverments, are not included in this publication[1]. Three sections articulate these transversal themes, with full awareness that there is no «one-size fits all» solution and that context matters. The first section examines the crucial points within media education: its definition and its core competences, as well as its implementation in a cross-cultural perspective, with development and human rights issues as major stakes. The second section focuses on capacity-building and enabling environments within the schools: it reviews and assesses state reforms, teacher training, curricular development and standard-setting practices with case studies from several regions of the world. The third section considers media education actors outside the educational setting, analyzing the role of regulatory bodies, private sector and civil society, in their capacity to raise awareness among adults and youth alike and to promote civic agency and participation as well as North-South, South-South and East-West exchanges.

Section one re-enforces the «centrality» of reaching a core definition of media education, for all actors to be convinced of its importance in the global knowledge society and to place it as a top priority in the public agenda. If media education is a lifelong process, media and information literacy consists of the operational skills and cognitive competences needed to acquire it. Literacy can be seen as encompassing info-competence and other text- and image-based skills to interpret media messages and communication services. Compared to other scholastic subjects, media education is not about input but about output, fostering the learners' inductive capacities to acquire and produce knowledge, as Lau and Cortes demonstrate. Their framework for «information literacy indicators» stresses the need to combine information and communication sciences as well as the synergies between libraries and schools, for the use of media as critical resources for (self-) development.

To implement such a framework, curricular development is key, and education sciences have to be brought in, as underlined by Opertti. He emphasizes the importance of the political and technical components of such a process of «educability». Media education is an agent for soft change, as it produces inclusion and helps fight poverty, marginalization and segregation. One of the key supports for media education is also «employability», a point stressed by Naji, who focuses on «the current gap between training and employment». He takes the case of information producers like journalists but his analysis could be extended to other categories of workers who don't have the skills and competences to deal with labour conditions more and more based on media and ICTs. Das reinforces this perspective for development, building on Sen's «capability» model, based on «functionings» i.e. the competences a person

needs to achieve his or her goals within local living conditions: the opportunities afforded by media education then encompass their civic agency as well as their employability. He insists on the fact that such a literacy allows for the conversion of commodities like media into functionings, that serve basic needs to fight poverty and deprivation as much as fundamental needs to foster freedom and social justice. Freedom of expression is the focus of Moeller's «global media literacy» experiment, that connects media education to freedom of expression –not in a highly abstract and remote manner but in a way that fosters a hands-on, grassroots civic appropriation of ethics. Her curriculum could be extended to other human rights, like the right to privacy, to intellectual property, to education… Her model, like all the ones proposed here, insists on «good governance, economic development and informed citizenship» and suggests a dynamic process that can be adopted in all sorts of contexts.

Section two shows how, worldwide, the last two decades have seen a number of changes that confirm the «inevitability» of media and information literacy. These changes are related to technological developments that turn media into intrusive and extensive prostheses, to economic developments that leave no country out of the media loop, to social developments that reveal a new awareness of youth, citizenship and consumption and to political developments that seek to manipulate media for ideological purposes while civic participation keeps putting pressure on governments to provide more social justice. Media education has changed too and progressed via research and practice to the point that it is often a research report that creates the triggering event at the origin of national reform. As such it can be «an agent of change» as Cheung explains in the case of Hong Kong. According to him, for successful school reform, media education is key. The three major ingredients are to connect it to civic agency, to information technologies and to curriculum review, in view of «new literacies» that are not just construed as negative political criticism but also as positive creative interaction. Jeong and her colleagues add an additional ingredient: to connect to existing communities of practice. The example of South Korea shows how teachers and educators seized on media even before their governments, as a grassroots initiative. In many countries, reforming schools to include media education is actually a way of legitimizing a decade's long situation. There is no need to reinvent the wheel, since the human and material resources exist, as exemplified by the Ontario case. Wilson and Duncan focus on nine key tenets for successful implementation of reform: grassroots communities of practice, curriculum development, research support, in-service training, communication networks, relevant media materials, professional organization of media education teachers, evaluation and collaboration with parents and media professionals.

As these tenets become clearer and clearer, resistance to change also becomes clearer, when it used to be clad in a cloak of silence and secrecy, and therefore difficult to act upon. Some useful lessons have been drawn from past successes and failures. Akyeampong locates resistance within the need to re-conceptualise teacher education curriculum practices on constructivist and cognitive ideas about knowledge and its production. The critical approach much touted by media educators is not so much about criticizing politics but criticizing one's own learning strategies. Bringing

expensive ICTs within the curriculum won't lead to any efficient results if long-standing traditions of teaching are not enriched with cognitive competences among teachers even before among students. Saleh locates resistance within the need to re-conceptualise capacity-building so as to connect media production to media education, reminding everybody that a healthy and free media profession can lead to a proficient and literate citizenry. What he describes as «the vicious cycle of oxymora» in the MENA region is actually valid in many places, where the gap between the profession's performance and citizen's expectations is quite wide. He alerts us to the possible «wrong» uses of media literacy as they can lead to distorsion and censorship. According to Saleh, media education can be an instrument for tolerance and cross-cultural understanding if five issues are correctly addressed: backing reform on broad sectors of society, supporting human rights to re-energize the social contract between leaders and their people, changing the media flow to improve trustful communication between governments and citizens, implementing laws with real civic engagement and raising the public's awareness about their rights for the well being of the whole society.

Section three emphasizes the increasing «respectability» of media education, outside traditional education sectors, with other actors involved either around youth or around media. The role of the state is key in this perspective, as coordinator of multi-stakeholder initiatives. Morduchowicz shows that adopting media education in the state public agenda by creating a special department in the ministry of education provides the capacity for outreach to a variety of actors (media producers, journalists, artists…) whose social responsibility can be called upon. Two are fundamental: media associations and private companies. They can be invited as partners but shouldn't intervene «in the elaboration of the objectives, the contents or the design of the initiatives» as a way to ensure that commercial interests don't capture the process but serve it. Implicating the private sector can be an efficient means to bridge the cultural and social divides. Avoiding the risk of capture or the clash between the distinctive missions of the school and business seems best to be done with «city diplomacy» often enlarged to creative regions, as exemplified by Camps in the case of the Catalan Generalitat, in Spain. She identifies another key space for coordination and multi-stakeholderism: the media regulatory bodies. They can act as media education labs to impulse the state public agenda and to manage efficient scaling-up. They can address content issues, so crucial to education, without the suspicion of censorship, as «they are in a good situation to propose interpretations of the legal norms and their implementation, as well as they are able to persuade media professionals of their ethical responsibility in the interpretation and implementation of the law».

Education is part of the obligations of public service radio and television and media literacy should naturally find its place within this mission that needs to be constantly recalled. But the public value of such a literacy can also be recognized by private media, as exemplified by Salomon in the case of OFCOM, the UK media regulator. She reviews different types of regulation from around the world, stressing the need for independence of regulatory bodies and establishing the basis for a broad consensus on what is regulated, from cultural values to consumer protection and youth empowerment. She considers the future of media education «as part of the

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self-regulation process», insisting on the need for major public policy choices regarding digital convergence as all countries will be moving from a scarcity rationale to an abundance rationale. Media education is seen as a necessary tool for audiences in decision-making so as to select out information from noise, and to discriminate valuable information resources from irrelevant delivery. Orhon also stresses the need to deal pro-actively with abundance, which engages such emerging countries as Turkey in the global media but also in «the global media literacy debate». He shows how the debate can be constructed locally, by multi-stakeholders such as universities, foundations and NGOs together with communities of practice in the field. The regulating authority can help in convening such actors together, with a view to infuse materials and human resources back into the schools. Banda takes this one step further, in a sustainable development perspective, pushing for «postcolonial revisionism of the liberal modes of thought and practice about media» as a way of combating the civic apathy of entire populations. He proposes a model for cultivating active citizenship and promoting an informed adherence to human rights that is connected also to an emancipatory vision of journalism to restore trust between people and their media. Turning civic apathy into civic agency is also Kotilainen's concern. The Finnish example aptly concludes this world tour of media education with a focus on youth as media producers and creators of the network cultures of the future. Civic engagement is positively correlated with media literacy and generates «experiences of influence in society» that suggests cross-generational strategies for building dialogue across different sectors and age-groups in a given society.

Ultimately this analysis, with its emphasis on the centrality, inevitability and respectability of media and information literacy, lays the challenge of reducing the implementation gap at the door of the decision-makers, testing their political will to proceed forward with media education. Policy-makers need to overcome the perceived risks that media education might threaten governmental power, national sovereignty and even the cultural identity of a country. In fact, it can lead to everybody's empowerment if set within a framework of good media governance where the benefits of the new cognitive ways of learning are shared, people-centred and not simply machine-induced. Resisting that move can bring confrontation and violence, whereas adopting it can bring not only soft change but «smart» change, while protecting and developing autochthonous cultures at the same time. Using media and ICTs with cohesion and inclusion can foster trust and respect among all members in a society and benefit all stakeholders involved.

Developing a coherent rationale is key, especially if governments show any readiness in pursuing their rights and responsibilities, that can be summed up in the 3 P's of sound Public Policy: Provision of media education for all their citizens, Participation of all their citizens in social, cultural and economic activities, and Protection of all citizens in need (either because of their age, their disabilities or their income). The growing worldwide consensus on the public value of media education entails a change of scale so that isolated classroom practices become generalized in national curricular development. It also entails a global, shared rationale that can be summarized in a nutshell as revolving around the 6 C's of the Competences for media education:

Comprehension, Critical Capacity, Creativity, Consumption, Citizenship and Cross-Cultural Communication. The overarching structure of such a rationale needs to be buttressed against the human-rights framework, with dignity and the construction of identity and solidarity at the core.

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Policy-makers have thus a vested interest in finding the right scale of interaction for media education as it can be a means for digital dynamics rather than divides. They can do so by using different rungs of governance (local, regional, state, federal…) as well as by identifying sites and entities that have the legitimacy to call upon actors that generally don't speak together to dialogue on a par (ministries of education, communication and culture, private companies and civil society associations, researchers and professionals, etc.). Media education holds the potential of reducing the disconnects between old and new media, high and low culture, proprietary and non-proprietary contents, cultural and commercial conflicts, etc. It offers a scenario for sustainability, especially with shared resources and open source initiatives. Ultimately, it can help reach the goals of the Millennium Declaration, especially the eradication of poverty and illiteracy, within Knowledge Societies.

## Note

[1] We encourage the reader to visit the Alliance of Civilizations' Clearinghouse on media literacy (aocmedialiteracy.org) and participate there by updating and/or uploading relevant information to this mapping exercise.

**1**

# Defining Media Education and its Stakes in a Cross-Cultural Perspective

# 1. Information Skills: Conceptual Convergence between Information and Communication Sciences

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## ABSTRACT

Nowadays, information is one of the main resources for an individual's development and well-being, so distributing and using information must be a top priority for society. This entails establishing strategies so people can learn to use this resource. Further, scientific progress and present-day educational paradigms stress trans-disciplinary learning. Information and communication sciences are by nature complementary –one focusing on the medium and the other on the process– so there must be greater clarity and conceptual consistency in a number of key shared areas. This contribution is an effort, from the perspective of library science and information science, to identify some possible meeting-points between these disciplines, regarding the study and development of the necessary competencies to handle information adequately.

## KEY WORDS

## 1. Introduction

This contribution identifies the main points where information and communication sciences converge, discussing the competencies that individuals must develop to handle efficiently information resources, which are an asset that can provide a range of socio-economic benefits to those who know how to use them. Information and communication professionals work with materials and tasks that have many aspects in common: information and knowledge, as well as the processes through which this information and knowledge are conveyed, disseminated, retrieved and used. It is necessary and timely to discuss this topic, because the mass media are doubtlessly a major factor to achieve the ideal goal of distributing information and the knowledge it contains more democratically, which is the aim and theme of a number of international projects promoted by such agencies as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). To implement these programmes requires defining indicators and standards to monitor effectiveness, which first calls for a common language – our focus here. Our analysis uses the terms «competencies», «skills» and «capacities» interchangeably as synonyms, to vary the prose, although the three terms do have their semantic nuances. We have also written as if the adjectives «informative and informational» were semantically alike, although they are not identical, and the same goes for the terms «information skill development» and «information literacy», although the latter is conceptually constrained in Spanish, albeit quite prevalent in the English literature.

## 2. The Present-day Importance of Information

On this topic, we will briefly mention the importance of information in any society, since anyone reading this contribution is doubtlessly convinced of the importance of information resources in our own society. UNESCO has declared (2002: 3): «Information and knowledge have not only become the principal forces of social transformation. They also hold the promise that many of the problems confronting human societies could be significantly alleviated if only the requisite information and expertise were systematically and equitably employed and shared». Along these same lines, a meeting of experts in Prague (2003), also under the auspices of UNESCO, issued the Declaration of Prague: Towards an Information Literate Society (Spenser, 2003: 1-2). This document urges the world's governments to develop interdisciplinary programmes to promote information literacy, as a necessary step toward creating a literate citizenry, an effective civil society and a competitive workforce. Although the exhortation was addressed to governments, this is clearly a task incumbent on all societal sectors. The importance that UNESCO grants information commodities and access to them was materialized in the Information for All Programme (IFAP), created in 2000, to integrate the efforts of governments from the full diversity of the world's countries, in order to create more equitable societies, by improving access to information. This Programme's work has lent fundamental support to the United Nations proposal to devoting the decade from 2003 to 2012 to world literacy[1].

## 3. The Information and Knowledge society

As we constantly repeat that information and knowledge are the main resources driving contemporary societies, this makes it almost automatic to choose this name for the historic stage that humankind is now experiencing. So, the concepts of «Information Society» and «Knowledge Society» have become commonplace, although they are not always differentiated from each other. This difference starts by understanding that information and knowledge are not synonymous. Readers of this essay surely understand clearly the difference between these terms. For instance, Bell (1985: 154) proposes that, when we speak of information, we are referring to «news, facts, statistics, reports, legislation, tax codes, judicial decisions, resolutions» and so on. Whereas «knowledge is interpretation in context, exegesis, relating and conceptualizing, forms of argument. Knowledge results in theories: the effort to establish meaningful relationships or connections among facts, data and other types of information in some coherent way, and explain the reasons for such generalizations». Some authors (including Bell) take a largely economic angle, asserting that the information society is transcending toward a «knowledge society», by advancing in such indicators as the number of scientists or others in research and development, or the percentage of the Gross Domestic Product devoted to this sort of activities.

Others, such as Pantzar (2000: 230-236), coordinator of the Information Research Programme in Finland, feel that humankind must take advantage of this exponentially expanded information, now easier to distribute thanks to new technologies, to generate useful knowledge to help problem-solving, reduce poverty, unemployment, loneliness, crime, insecurity and war. As human communities access ever-more-plentiful information, they will have the raw material to turn into knowledge and we can then speak of a Knowledge Society.

Another key feature of the information or knowledge society is the so-called digital divide: all those barriers that keep a person or members of a societal group or country from accessing information commodities. Originally posited as mainly an issue of available technologies and skills to handle them, with time other factors have been discussed, including mastery of the competencies necessary to handle information. UNESCO, for example, seldom uses the term digital divide, because it feels that the term refers mainly to one of the problems regarding lack of access to and use of information –the technological aspect– but that, in addition to this factor, there are other obstacles, cultural, political, ethical and educational, that fit better under the concept of a «cognitive divide» (UNESCO, 2005: 23). Certainly, one of the obstacles to better use of information does involve citizens' low or lack of competencies to handle information.

## 4. Related Concepts and Terms

International efforts to improve information distribution, access and use all grapple with the variety of terms used for the competencies that must be developed, and the broad range of strategies to accomplish this task. In April 2005, in Lyon (France), the

European Regional Meeting on Literacy gathered some 150 participants from 38 nations, belonging to different sectors in their countries. To prepare for the Conference, these participants were asked to fill in an extensive survey on literacy in their countries. The surveys (30 were received) revealed a great variety of definitions for literacy, from different economic, social or cultural angles (Encuentro, 2005).

Of course, standardizing the terminology used is a prerequisite to potentially designing indicators for statistical monitoring of actions undertaken, and results attained. Some current progress in developing international indicators is being coordinated by the UNESCO Statistics Institute, which is initially considering indicators to address three main aspects: supply, to reflect the degree to which governments and other national agencies provide information through a variety of channels; use of information; and the degree to which people acquire the skills needed to use information and communication technologies (UNESCO, 2007: 3).

In Library and Information Sciences, a polemic has long raged about the scope and validity of the different terms used for activities, experiences, or states related to developing the capacities to handle information. This panorama is further complicated by linguistic and cultural differences, and by the continual appearance of new technologies, proposals and perspectives. The discussion has reached such a point that some authors, such as Owusu-Ansah (2005: 366), have called for a truce, now that so much ink has been spilt trying to convince each other about which term is more accurate, when the truth is that supplanting one term by another merely changes the name or descriptor assigned to the concept, but without transforming or clarifying any better the phenomenon identified. The terms being disputed include: «user education, user training, bibliographic instruction, information skills development, information literacy» and, most recently, «information competencies development». In a book that is quite well-known internationally through its translation into Spanish, Wilson (2000: 103) provides a brief description of the main terms used in instructional programs, although obviously referring to those used in United States libraries, where there seems to be less semantic confusion. Wilson speaks of: 1. Library Orientation; 2. Library Instruction; 3. Bibliographic Instruction; and 4. Information Management Education.

However, Wilson feels that these concepts must not only be viewed as semantic variations, but also as a reflection of evolution in practice, where activities and tasks for user education have become increasingly complex. This complexity has been generated largely by the ICTs, which have made it possible both to store greater volumes of information and to retrieve it faster and more effectively. However, it has also made it necessary to know how to handle these technologies and figure out how to sift out clearly the best-quality information.

In several Spanish-speaking countries, it seems that most of the discussion revolves around whether it is better to say «user education» (educación) or «user training» (formación). The latter term, according to a note by Compton García-Fuentes, translator of the book «Reference and Information Services: An Introduction»[2], comes from the French psycho-pedagogical school of thought based on cognitivism and

emphasizing meaningful learning. That same note also refers readers to a book by Bernard Honoré: «Toward a Theory of Education: Dynamics of Formativity». This assertion by Compton García seems accurate because the term «formation» is widely used in the French educational system. In fact, the term that seems to be most used in that country, to refer to information user education, is «Formation à la Maîtrise de l´Information», whereas the literature on education written in English makes almost no use of the term «formativity» (according to a search in the ERIC data base[3]). However, even UNESCO, through the General Information Programme (Tocatlian, 1978: 382) early on (three decades ago) considered «user education» and «user training» as synonyms, defining them as: «any project or program to orient and instruct current and potential users, individually or collectively, in order to help them: a) recognize their own information needs; b) formulate these needs; c) effectively use information services, and d) evaluate these services».

The term «information skills» is consistently used, to this day, in the United Kingdom literature and has been widely disseminated by professionals of the Autonomous University of Ciudad Juárez (Mexico), during the past decade, translated as «Desarrollo de Habilidades Informativas» (DHI), which places the emphasis on the process: «development», and on the product: «information skills». «Informative» as the adjective form has the disadvantage of alluding to «the capacity to inform», so «informational» is more appropriate, referring more directly to the information. However «Informative» has been kept because it was used initially and has become commonplace in Mexico and elsewhere in Latin America. This argument is similar to the one in English-speaking countries that have kept «Information Literacy» despite its semantic limitations. The term «development of information skills» has proven quite useful, stressing the practical aspect of user education sessions, often based in computing centres. However, when we say «development of information skills», we are actually referring to only part of the elements comprising the competencies – knowledge and attitudes must also be added. The phrase development of information skills, or simply the acronym DHI, has taken root deeply among librarians in some Spanish-speaking countries. Moreover, since early 2006, Spaniard librarians have been proposing the acronym ALFIN to refer to informational literacy, as a way of avoiding arguments about the most appropriate term. This initiative has been successful. The acronym is easy to pronounce, but it conceals the term «literacy» (alfabetización) with its negative connotation of an absence of skills or competencies, which must be developed starting right from «ABC» with users. This acronym has been used increasingly, although limited by its having meaning only in Spanish.

### 4.1. Competencies for Use of Information

A term used increasingly is «information competencies» or «information competencies development». This is surely due to the influence of new educational models benchmarked to competencies that students must demonstrate by the time they complete their studies. Examples of using the term competencies related to information management are frequent: a quick Internet search shows millions of mentions.

A very concrete example is the title of the standards created by the Association of College and Research Libraries, in the document describing the characteristics that a university student should have to become an effective information user – one of the documents most consulted and used in the world of librarianship: «Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education: Standards, Performance Indicators, and Outcomes» (ACRL, 2000). The term «Literacy» could easily have been left out.

One major difference between these terms involves those activities by agents external to the individual who receives their impact (such as the work of librarians) and others driven by one's own initiatives and personal, individual work. Thus, discussions of bibliographic instruction, library instruction or information literacy (which we will discuss below) usually refer to activities that librarians design and do to teach users about library resources and services and how to use them, with somewhat passive user participation; the concept of user education also has this connotation.

In new educational paradigms, these perspectives tend to lose momentum, as the learning process is expected to depend mainly on individuals' own personal work and initiative. This agrees increasingly with cognitive theories of learning, defined as «an individual act related to each individual's conceptual structure and knowledge» (Hernández Salazar, 1998). Moreover, the literature constantly repeats that thinking skills, displayed through critical thinking, are a factor complementing competencies for mastering information. At the same time, critical thinking develops better as people become more self-sufficient in their learning –among other things, by using information resources more effectively. It is therefore necessary for educational systems to help students develop critical thinking, although there is actually very little theory as of yet about how to support this process. Information professionals involved in user education programs must also learn more about this topic and how to facilitate information and mass media users' development.

## 4.2. Information Literacy

The concept of «Information Literacy» was coined by Paul Zurkowski in a 1974 report to the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, describing the main skills that employees would need in the growing service sector of the United States. According to Zurkowski: «People trained in the application of information resources to their work can be called information literates. They have learned techniques and skills for utilizing a wide range of information tools… in molding information-solutions to their problems» (Kapitske, 2003: 39). Patricia S. Breivik (2006: 7-8) writes that a major feature of this concept is that it takes «information literacy as a product. It is a product of the student's learning. It does not involve stimuli or inputs, but rather what people can do after having received those stimuli or inputs». Breivik's connotation is not implicit literally in the term, since it has the same instructional orientation as the phrases of «user education» or «training», and therefore does not reflect constructivist learning trends.

This concept of «information literacy», which can be expressed several ways in Spanish, appears as the broadest and most widely used, having arisen in English-speaking countries, which have published most of the literature on this topic. Therefore, the term has spread, at least in the West, if not worldwide. In other languages, as in Spanish from Spain, the English word is used directly, rather than translating it, as is done in Latin America. The constraint, again, is that «literacy» portrays the information user as a person without competencies, who must be taught from scratch, their «ABCs». This generates confusion in Spanish-speaking countries, because the word «literacy» usually means minimal capacities to read and write, and the tasks required to teach those capacities. A similar situation arises in France, where the term used is «Formation à la Maîtrise de l'Information» (Chevillote, 2003: 24-25). Further, it is interesting to read recent proposals, even in the United States, to replace the concept of «Information literacy» with, for example, «Information fluency», with the argument that the former has a negative connotation, seeming to view learners as «illiterates». The concept of «Information fluency» has the advantage of giving the idea that individuals are just trying to enhance their information management competencies (Mani, 2004: 30). The Information Literacy Section of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) discussed, in 2006, a name change to some other more appropriate term that would be linguistically acceptable in other major languages. However, their study concluded that the same name should be kept, in view of its international recognition, even among library funding agencies, and recommended that each country adopt the most appropriate term in their own language.

## 5. Relationship with Other Forms of Literacy

Using the English term of «information literacy» in the following sections for practical reasons and because the literature cited uses it (despite all the arguments due to its semantic limitations), we will review the relationship of this concept among the disciplines of communication and information sciences, which is our main topic. Some authors, such as Bawden (2002: 361-408) have made an effort to attempt to establish a relationship among different skills related or close to information literacy. This group of skills is often referred to as a form of literacy, understood not only as the ability to read and write, but to perform the necessary tasks to function adequately in a given context. So, Bawden analyzes the relationship between information literacy and the other following forms of literacy: 1. Library Literacy; 2. Media Literacy; and 3. Computer Literacy. «Based on an analysis of several internationally-known indices, the author finds that the term «information literacy» has spread since the early 1990s, whereas «media literacy» has been growing in use through the end of the 1990s». Another way to find quickly relationships among different competencies or literacies is by checking the thesaurus of the Education Resources Information Centre (ERIC), one of the best data bases for educational topics. According to the ERIC thesaurus, searching for the term «literacy», a range of related terms appears (see Figure 1)[4].

| | |
|---|---|
| Scope Note: | Ability to read and write -- also, communication with written or printed symbols (i.e., reading and writing) |
| Broader Terms: | n/a |
| Narrower Terms: | Adult Literacy; Emergent Literacy; Family Literacy; Functional Literacy; Information Literacy; Media Literacy; Reading; Scientific Literacy; Workplace Literacy; Writing (Composition). |
| Related Terms: | Basic Skills; Cultural Literacy; Illiteracy; Literacy Education; Metalinguistics; Numeracy; Reading Skills; Reading Writing Relationship; Writing Skills. |
| Used For: | Literacy Skills. |
| Add Date: | 07/01/1966 |

Figure 1

## 5.1. Computer Literacy

A special mention goes to the relationship between developing information skills or competencies and computer literacy, because the former are sometimes used more broadly, to include information and communication technologies. It is also common to find people, including students, who think that good information management is guaranteed by mastery of computers and other ICTs. The flaw there is that information competencies refer not only to skills and knowledge, but also attitudes, which will not accrue just by knowing how to use technologies. In fact, there are certain very important skills to manage efficiently information that computer literacy may not necessarily generate: thinking skills, necessary to analyze, evaluate, infer, and generalize the information one reviews.

In this regard, the Association of College and Research Libraries, drafters of the ACRL standards, took a position to clarify this: «Information literacy is related to information technology skills, but has broader implications for the individual, the educational system, and for society… Information literacy, while showing significant overlap with information technology skills, is a distinct and broader area of competence. Increasingly, information technology skills are interwoven with, and support, information literacy» (ACRL, 2000: 3).

## 5.4. Other Literacies

A document by Fransman (2005: 9-10), distributed by UNESCO, lists the competencies or literacies that grant access to information and knowledge, including the following: Information literacy; (New) media literacy; Digital / computing / ICT literacy; Visual literacy; Environmental literacy; Political / civic / citizen literacy; Cultural literacy.

In a more intricate representation (see Figure 2), Catts and Lau (2008: 18) share the idea that developing information skills or information literacy is a core element

to many models of competencies for adults. The constellation of skills that an individual requires to function adequately in society is varied: at its foundation is the person's ability to reason, to think critically; followed by the next level, the capacity to communicate verbally, speaking and listening, so citizens can interact with the world they live in; then come the competencies of literacy, reading, writing, and numerical operations, among others. This segment of the constellation of skills is fundamental to modern life, because the citizen will have skills to communicate in writing in different walks of life. All the preceding strata of competencies require, in turn, reinforcement by skills to handle information technologies and mass media; the former enable handling of digital technology, and communication tools. When an individual has these competencies, he or she can definitely develop greater media capacities to access, filter, judge and use the information received through multiple channels, including the mass media, which comprise a society's information life, especially in an industrialized society. Additionally, information competencies such as media skills or ability to use the mass media are indispensable for the person to identify their own information needs, and have the capacity to satisfy them by locating, retrieving, and evaluating information, according to their own parameters of significance, in order to use it, build new concepts and make decisions while climbing that scaffolding assembled with prior knowledge and new information; and then, ideally, communicate their cognitive output through a document (note, article, book or audiovisual medium) or any other written or oral means.
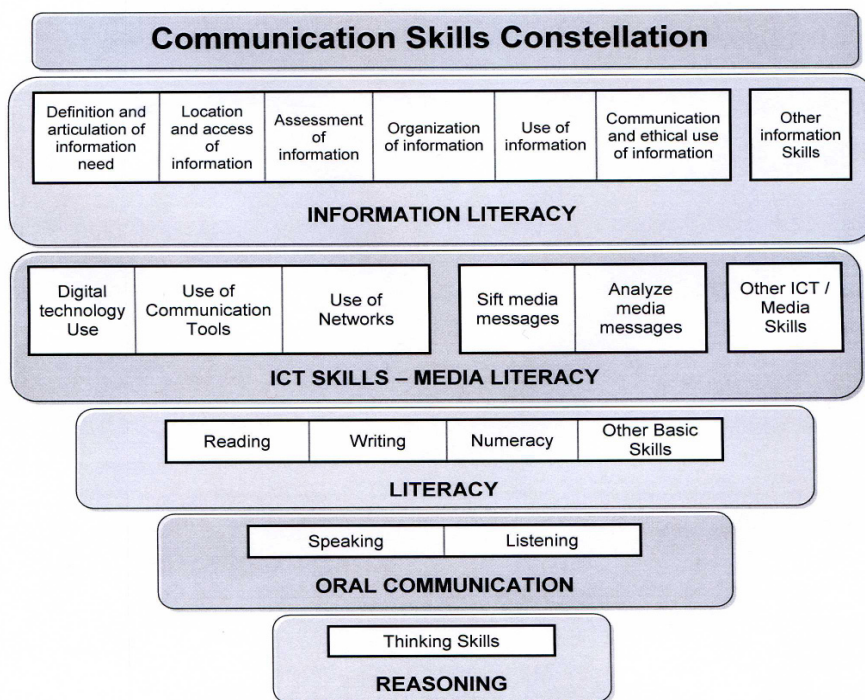


Figure 2. Source: Ralph Catts and Jesus Lau (2008).
Towards Information Literacy Indicators. Paris: UNESCO, 46; 18.

## 6. Managing Information from Mass Media, from a Librarian's Perspective

Much of the next section must be viewed with some subjectivity, because it is based mainly on the authors' personal appraisals. However, there may be some lines that should be pursued more deeply. First, the type of information traditionally presented in the media, compared to that which receives more attention from librarians and information professionals.

### 6.1. Information of Interest to Librarians

First of all, we are aware that development of ICTs fosters keeping the formats used to publish and query information the same, so it is necessary to pay more attention to the origin and purposes of information. Information professionals grant greater importance to information that can be considered academic or has the characteristics of having been developed following methodologies qualifying as scientific. Therefore, much of the information circulating in the mass media (e.g. newspapers, blogs, television and radio programmes, among others) is considered unworthy of notice. The type of materials considered «good» are documents of an academic nature, such as an article in a journal, books and other academic and scientific productions, for which the ability to identify, locate and retrieve them requires acquiring skills. By contrast, the mass media reach users generically, so to speak, almost always omnipresent, quite unlike academic information, which must be sought out and located.

Librarians and other information professionals feel that the mass media work regularly with information that has been put together differently from academic information and even pursues different aims. The mass information published in such media (mainly in electronic or audiovisual media such as radio, television and the Internet media, where fleeting flows predominate) competes for consumers' attention, by offering novelty information. Therefore, that information was probably not gathered by following academic-type systematized methodologies. The information circulating in the mass media is not what is most necessary or useful, but what is likeliest to catch the audience's attention. Of course, the mass media also have scientific research, such as feature articles in newspapers, or documentaries on television. As for the way that information is expressed in academic media, regardless of the media used, the main difference seems to lie in making it clear regularly whether the author has factual support for the information, or he just mentions ideas that came to mind; this is less clear in the information published through the mass media. To better explain and understand this distinction, according to Argudín (2001: 86-100), information is regularly presented in the form of: 1. Facts - Information that can be validated; 2. Inferences - Fact + Opinion, inducing one thing from another, and 3. Opinions - Value judgments.

These factors listed by Argudín are common to any kind of information. However, in academic communications, the different types are always —or ought to be— clearer. From an information professional's perspective, this does not always happen with the information published in media such as TV, newspapers, radio, and other

media broadcast over Internet, among others. This does not necessarily mean that the information containing plenty of the authors' opinions is worthless, because their opinions are surely value added, if backed by facts (making an inference) –this is not the case with unsubstantiated opinions. In short, the daily news, published by the mass media, poses greater risks in terms of accuracy for readers, who have usually not developed the skills to distinguish reliable information from unreliable material.

Further, more information circulates in the media with the ulterior purpose of persuading the audience to make certain viewpoints their own. For instance, during election times, the media are saturated with messages and news that may be slanted by the authors' particular interests regarding the contending candidates; in fact, some media are or become allies of one side or the other (Aceves, 2001).

## 7. Common and Differentiated Competencies

The relationship between information literacy or information competency development and developing skills in using mass media is tightly linked to the goals of each. The greatest difference lies in the emphasis they place on the different compe-tencies they seek to develop. For information literacy, one emphasis is to seek and retrieve information, whereas in media literacy, the emphasis is more on evaluating the information; where both competencies coincide fully is to use the information critically. Similarly, information competency development emphasizes using materials mostly of an academic or scientific sort. This is a priority for this type of competencies, because they usually involve complex citizen decision-making and educational work by individuals, from elementary school to adulthood and post-graduate studies, while developing media competencies is generally for any citizen's societal functions, whether strictly social or economic and political. In other words, they are ideally competencies for the entire public, for any individual who not only reads, but for any person able to listen and watch the different mass communication alternatives on the market. Further, it is difficult to separate the aims of the two competencies in regard to the target audience, since developing information competencies, at least theoretically, targets
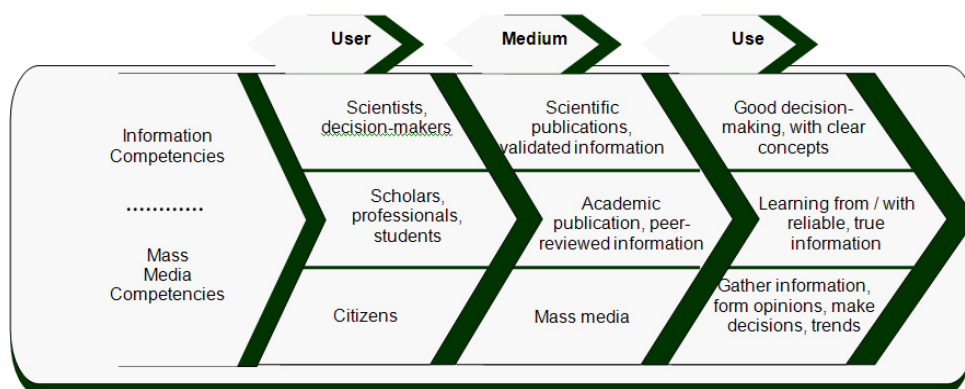


Figure 3

all sorts of individuals, i.e., children, adults, scholars and citizens in general, although the main efforts are made for the educational sector; meanwhile, developing media competencies also targets the public at large but, as with information competencies, usually focuses more on citizens in general. Figure 3 describes the close inter-relationship between the two groups of competencies and their target audiences, which are the same; the media; where they have differences; and the capacities they emphasize, for citizens to become informationally equipped. The elements in the figure cannot be separated strictly, since they are all adjacent and overlapping, to a greater or lesser degree.

## 8. Conclusions

Information competencies required by an individual grow in complexity with the activities he or she is engaged in, whether the man or woman on the street, or a scientist —which could turn out to be the same person, but in different settings. If information needs are for day-to-day use, the required competencies will be really basic and simple, but as the decisions demanded become more complex, they will require more profound skills, as in academic or research settings. In other words, information skills will have to be more developed, which depends on the person's experience and education. These complex information needs require greater availability and access to formats with gatekeepers, such as journals or hard-copy / digital books, which entail more complex production mechanisms than the regular contents of a newspaper or television programme —not to deny that there are newspaper articles and television programmes with in-depth research and reasoning— which also demand high levels of knowledge and competencies for citizens to understand and reason with such messages. However, generalizing (and thereby obviously glossing over their particular features) about information skills implies that they are more oriented toward using more complex documents, whereas media skills for dealing with the mass media are (also venturing to generalize) for using simpler information for commonplace application to individuals' day-to-day lives.

Both kinds of competencies —information and media competencies— are vital. Media skills obviously define a society's capacity to criticize the media that bombard them every day, and this decides the society's daily destiny, while information skills are linked to a country's scientific and academic capacity to generate science and technology, among other applications in production and humanistic sectors.

As a final conclusion, the range of informational and media competencies have a common convergence in the capacity to handle information inputs with critical capacity; where they differ is in their emphasis on search and retrieval skills, and the types of information documents they use. The individuals with whom both disciplines want to work (librarianship / information sciences and communication sciences) are the same, all the way from children beginning school through post-graduate scholars, including regular citizens. In both, the aim is for people to develop critical judgment to use information. The difference is that librarianship emphasizes the use of academic

and scientific information and communication sciences favour the use of mass media, in their huge audiovisual and written variety.

## Notes

[1] More information on this Programme can be found at the UNESCO (http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=21290&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html) (2008-05-28).

[2] Richard E. Bopp & Linda C. Smith (Eds.) (2000). Reference and Information Services: An Introduction. The note appears on p. 101 of this book.

[3] Search retrieved on 30 September 2008, using the term «Literacy» on the ERIC Website (www.eric.ed.gov).

[4] Search retrieved on 30 September 2008, using the term «Literacy» on the ERIC Website (www.eric.ed.gov).

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# 2. Curricular Contribution for Media Education: A Process in Construction

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ABSTRACT

This contribution analyzes media and information literacy from an educational and curricular perspective, emphasizing development of competencies that students require in order to participate actively in the modern world. It considers the political and technical components of curriculum development that reflect the type of society we wish to construct. Likewise, it presents the concept of inclusive education as an educational vision that aims at guaranteeing the right of all children, young people and adults to receive an education matching their expectations, needs and forms of learning, and that ensures participation and equal opportunities. The concept of a «glo-local» curriculum is discussed, which is based on developing competencies in students to enable feedback between global and local realities, trying to bring schools closer to the situations of daily life. The analysis concludes that media and information literacy should be cross-cutting in the curricula, which requires, among other tenets, high-quality teacher education, smooth communication among teachers, and solid, inclusive educational proposals within a participatory consensus-building process.

## 1. Introduction

Discussing media education from a curricular perspective promotes competency development in students. This basically means mobilizing and integrating values, attitudes, behaviours, abilities and knowledge to enable students to address and resolve situations in daily life, shaping and reinforcing their action as citizens to develop and change societies. Progressively becoming a competent person is a necessary step to be able to read, understand, criticize, and propose, effectively wielding citizenship comprehensively.

When we refer to education for citizenship in the framework of education as a right, we include Media Education as a core component, since the media permeate people's lives, generating, consolidating and changing –among other things– ideas, visions, attitudes and opinions. The challenge is not just to provide criteria and instruments so the child or youth can critically face off to the media, but also to understand that the media contextualize and often determine the ways that people exercise their rights culturally, politically, economically and socially.

We feel that media education must be part of a broader, plural, open, in-depth discussion about the roles of education and curriculum as key factors contributing to laying the foundations for citizenship and the kind of society we live in and want to build. Discussing the media without educational and curricular references and contents may be an exercise loaded with noble aspirations, but without the anchoring that the educational system actually requires to become a mental and social change factor.

Teaching and learning about media and information involves critical thinking when receiving and producing mass media. This entails knowing about personal and social values, responsibilities for ethical use of information, participation in cultural dialogue and maintaining autonomy in a context in which the influences eroding that autonomy may be particularly subtle. The media and teaching about media can be summarized as basic capacities: critical thinking, creativity, citizenship and intercultural communication[1]. These capacities materialize and develop through competences mainstreamed through comprehensive citizen education. Competencies must enhance opportunities and help narrow inequities in the knowledge society, attempting to reflect renewed ways of understanding and responding to children's and youth's expectations and needs.

We propose to discuss a series of ideas and concepts to inform the construction of a comprehensive vision of media education, namely:

• Political and technical construction of a broad vision of curriculum, by defining the roles of education;

• Inclusive education as the principle orienting Education for All that in fact helps democratize educational opportunities;

• The concept of a curriculum integrating realities, from global to local (glo-local), grounded in developing competencies to link effectively, critically, and creatively schools and classrooms to challenges and situations of daily life.

## 2. Education and Curriculum, Two Complementary Currents of Change

Viewing education as a right, the role of education in society has at least five core dimensions:

• Education as a means to lay the conceptual and empirical groundwork for democratic citizenship in a society sharing a basic set of values and norms. The purpose is to foster understanding, knowledge and to practice values such as liberty, pluralism, justice, solidarity, tolerance, respect and excellence. Integrating means understanding and valuing diversity and its multiple expressions, focusing on universalism by combining and reconciling global, national and local responsibilities. Present-day discussion (e.g., in France) regarding cultural models for citizenship in liberal republics illustrates the tensions and conflicts, as stated by Yves Lenoir[2], between universal representation of values and norms based on a national body politic and forming a community as a free, instrumental association of people sharing values and purposes.

• Education as a key social and economic policy contemplating equity and quality as complementary concepts in the quest for conditions and opportunities for equitably distributed well-being. Education is not just social policy, but a key cornerstone of sound economic policy. Without equitable, high-quality education, sustainable economic growth and fair distribution of opportunities are unattainable. Therefore, education as economic and social policy entails developing public policies to narrow the disparities in access to educational achievement, often associated with the lack of an approach to education adapted to the diversity of cultural, social, economic, gender, ethnic and migratory factors. Gaps in learning outcomes and in acquisition of basic competencies –as shown by PISA– may prove to be powerful sources of exclusion and disenfranchisement for most of society (as in Latin America[3]).

• Education as the main factor in reducing poverty and marginalization with a long-term outlook emphasizes the need for early interventions to facilitate children's development. Historically, the role of education has been understood as circumscribed to situations of poverty, implementing compensatory and/or remedial measures (e.g., school meals and health care targeting certain societal groups). However, since the 1990s (e.g., in Latin America), the scope of discussion has been expanded and enriched by introducing the concept of «educability».

As Néstor López[4] puts it, educability is a relational concept about the degrees of interconnection between 1) family and societal conditions suited to enable active participation in the educational process (access to minimal well-being and socialization of values and attitudes promoting and supporting the relevance of learning) and 2) educational conditions (schools familiar with students' characteristics and expectations and pursuing strategies to meet them).

The role of government is a key factor to ensure this interrelation, forging the necessary links, interactions and dialogues among civil society, families and schools. The concept of educability helps transcend a sort of social determinism, mainly associated with the belief that it will be enough to improve material conditions, in order to achieve quality education; further, it emphasizes the educational system's

responsibility to understand and be responsive to student diversities. Learning conditions and processes call for a minimum foundation of educability.

• Education as the most effective way to achieve dignified, proactive, intelligent, productive integration of national societies in a globalized world. This is not to accept fatalistically that the world's realities cannot be changed, or to endorse international values and standards as «politically correct» as the one proper way to think. On the contrary, it entails developing citizen competencies to address real-life situations promoting and facilitating critical analysis of reality and the capacity to understand and change that reality.

Moreno (2006) says: «Educational reform worldwide is increasingly curriculum-centred, as growing demands for change tend to focus on both structures and contents of school curricula»[5]. The curriculum must integrate political and technical components into an educational proposal reflecting the type of society we hope to build. So, with an understanding of the basic roles of education, curricular discussion emerges as the necessary counterpart, as one of the fundamental instruments available to materialize a vision of education.

Demeuse and Strauven (2006) say that a global vision of curriculum should include: learning outcomes to achieve, pedagogical and instructional strategies linked to teaching and learning, teaching materials for teachers and students, the discipline's contents, evaluation of learning outcomes and achievements, and curriculum management[6]. Recognizing its multidimensional nature, Blaslavsky (2002) conceptualized curriculum as «a dense, flexible contract among politics, society and teachers»[7]. The idea is to combine and blend universal concepts supporting implementation (density), and to help generate clear, concrete opportunities to choose among options and materialize them (flexibility). Curricular proposals work better with sound national referents shared by all, fostering local freedom and autonomy for school administrators and teachers to co-develop the curriculum.

Curricular issues are not endogenous or exogenous for any person or institution. The curriculum expresses and reflects a society's values, attitudes, expectations and feelings about its welfare and development. It is also a complex mixture of visions and interests of multiple institutions and stakeholders, often contradicting each other.

A curriculum may be viewed as a product (the what) or a process (the how), both equally important. Prerequisites for quality learning include, among others: sensible curricular documents reflecting society's vision of what and how students should learn; innovative implementation strategies that are conducive to a pleasant, friendly learning environment; and inclusive teaching and learning practices.

A curriculum is not «the answer» to educational problems. However, there is no effective educational reform without sound curricular vision. It would be difficult to improve educational quality (processes and results) without developing a curricular vision justifying why and what is important and relevant (basic and necessary) to teach students, according to how we interpret society's expectations and demands.

Interpretations are always arguable, and largely swayed by political, ideological and historical considerations. A good example is the discussion about national history programme objectives and contents, especially in societies that have experienced recent conflicts[8].

What to include or exclude from a curriculum, in terms of disciplines and contents, always generates complex, heated debates; often, a core problem with educational reform is ending up with an overloaded curriculum that is too much for students to learn effectively (Opertti 2006)[9]. Coll and Martín (2006)[10] established the difference «between what is basic and absolutely necessary, and that which is basic and desirable in elementary-school curriculum» – «absolutely basic» being learning that is essential to students' personal and social development, to their lifetime pursuits and social inclusion. They have said that «curricula and school time are not elastic».

Discussion about most curricula does not involve the roles that society and its stakeholders expect from education, but rather with historical disciplines, traditional forms and contents for organizing knowledge, and the strong and sometimes decisive influence of corporate interests. Cristián Cox (2006) refers to the «cultural rigidity of categories for organizing knowledge and observable isomorphism between this structure and teachers' professional identity»[11]. Cecilia Braslavsky, who was responsible for reforming high-school education in Argentina (1997-99), considers that «an attempt to shift boundaries between disciplines also involves redefining teachers' positions and identities»[12].

The problem is not just redefining the traditional boundaries among disciplines in response to the changing epistemological nature of the way knowledge is constructed, validated and ultimately applied in daily life, but also reflecting on how the new way of organizing knowledge actually affects teaching and learning in classrooms. For example, a social sciences curriculum would surely be a better way of sharing broader schemes of reference with students to enable them to understand the world they live in (including, for example, media education), than the traditional arrangement of history and geography as separate, disconnected subjects. Similarly, if teachers and administrators oppose the new curriculum and do not even try to understand it; this generates what Jacinto and Freites Frey have called «resistance to facing a reform»[13].

It is likely to be tempting to return to the past, to the pre-reform stage that is «more comfortable and less bothersome», reaffirming the disciplines and traditional ways of teaching (frontal learning strategies, conveying more than sharing and imposing rather than orienting). So, we run the risk that students will see the curriculum as something distant and irrelevant, unmotivating and eliciting no commitment to learning. Such a curriculum penalizes the most vulnerable population sectors most, since they often have no other cultural, social or cognitive stimuli to help motivate them and to make sense of school. This holds for remote population groups without, for example, any libraries to look for information of interest, where reading becomes irrelevant to students' lives.

### 3. Democratizing and Including

The central challenge for educational change is to include everyone, democratizing the conditions and opportunities for access, processes and results. Equal opportunity has historically meant access to education, mainly to elementary school (e.g., creating schools in rural areas). This concept of equality has spread and grown to include equal conditions for social service provision, for acquiring basic competencies and achieving results. Further, we now talk of equity rather than equality as the guiding criterion to design and evaluate policies and programmes, particularly in regard to narrowing inequities (gaps) such as in learning outcomes.

Achieving increasing equity requires inclusive educational systems and curricula. The concept of inclusive education has evolved to mean that all children must have equivalent learning conditions and opportunities regardless of their social and cultural backgrounds and different abilities and capacities.

The pressing need to democratize opportunities to access and enjoy quality education can take inclusive education as a central category to re-create and renew policies and programmes for educational change. Inclusion is not just a response to traditional, structural problems of poverty and challenges of modernization and socio-cultural integration. Inclusion is also a way to address other forms and contents of exclusion, such as social gaps separating people from access to Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), marginalizing youth who do not study or work, and considering social or cultural diversity as an obstacle to integrating society.

Inclusive education means enforcing the right of all children, youth and adults to education, participation and equal opportunities, lending special attention to those living in vulnerable situations or suffering from any sort of discrimination. From a social perspective, inclusive education is substantially related to the discussion about the type of society and quality of democracy we want and pursue (a feedback loop between education and society). So, inclusive education is a central social policy underpinning long-term equitable development of society.

This expanded perspective reveals core issues of educational inclusion, such as 1) the fight against poverty, marginalization, segregation, exclusion, and HIV-AIDS; 2) considering cultural diversity and multiculturalism as a right and a context for learning; and 3) guaranteed rights for minorities, immigrants and native populations.

From a strictly educational standpoint, an inclusive strategy carefully considers the specific, unique details of each child and youth, to provide them with genuine lifelong educational opportunities. The ways teachers and students interact and generate empathy, growing closer, understanding and respecting their differences, will jointly create the appropriate, feasible conditions of relevant learning opportunities for all.

Education including all must progressively personalize educational offerings in response to diversities –not just cultural or social, but also individual. Personalization of education is a growing trend in educational systems and basically provides a way to achieve high levels of equity and quality. This entails, among other things: a)

developing more flexible curricula adapted to the requirements of different population groups, less overloaded with contents and more oriented toward developing the competencies required to cope with the situations and challenges of daily life; b) schools led and managed in an open, ongoing relationship with the community, upheld by professional communities of practice that believe in and work toward developing relevant responses to students' learning needs; c) differentiated support for students, so each school foresees learning difficulties and overcomes them with personalized attention, as an opportunity to learn more and better.

In general, making education inclusive[14] calls for reflection and collective action regarding the concepts of social justice, beliefs about each student's learning potential, conceptual frameworks embodied in the best practices for teaching and learning, and promotion of a broader view of the curriculum to include processes and results.

## 4. A Glo-local Curriculum to Reconcile Diverse Realities and Democratize Learning

Educational systems seeking inclusion as a central policy goal will necessarily require curricular change and development to materialize in schools and classrooms. Curricular construction is specific and unique in each national context, reflecting the diversity of approaches and proposals by multiple stakeholders, within the educational system and outside it, to meet society's needs (the arduous, complex and delicate task of understanding and responding to society's expectations and demands). There are no international «success» models to copy or replicate mechanically. However, there are trends, references and results to share inter-regionally that look like visions, strategies and «sensible practices» (rather than calling them «best practices», which could sound prescriptive).

One of the greatest challenges lies in striking the delicate balance between global society and national needs. As Cox (2006) puts it, «without such a balance, wouldn't there be the risk of contents (globally referenced or aligned) without context (national socio-economic realities)?»[15]. The quest to reconcile and integrate national and local realities and contents would seem to be an increasingly universal trend in the approach to and materialization of educational change.

What are some of these universal trends? First of all, agreement about the education – curriculum association and that the curriculum reflects the society we want to build, outlined in a series of foundational goals, structures, strategies and evaluation systems, grounded in a common vision. This is not the summation of un-coordinated subjects limited to the teacher-subject relationship and lecture-type styles of transmitting information and knowledge.

Secondly, the progressive universalization of curricular concerns and issues demanding precisely a suitable inter-relationship among global, national and local levels. Globalization contextualizes these topics but the answers are always national or local constructs. There is growing recognition of common core issues (e.g., citizen education, education for sustainable development and HIV / AIDS), leading to

significant similarities in structure, contents and methods for new curricular proposals (Meyer, 1999)[16]. Competency-based approaches that countries at different levels of development are tending to adopt contribute to a relative standardization of curricular change.

Thirdly, following the previous point, there is also growing awareness that implementing curricular change results in similar challenges in different regions of the world, as described by the International Bureau of Education (IBE-UNESCO)[17]. Braslavsky (2004) found that educational systems are constructed on the basis of imagined societies more than on reality, and imagined forms of progress are quite similar over the world[18].

Braslavsky (2004) has also suggested the possibility of working toward a «glo-local» curriculum[19] integrating realities and issues under a diversity-based concept of universalism. Accordingly, there are five aspects that seem to reflect certain increasingly universal trends:

• A marked emphasis on such learning areas and subjects as mathematics, languages (native and foreign languages complementing each other, English starting in elementary school) and sciences (integrating the teaching of biology, physics and chemistry, to develop scientific and technological competencies) and mainstreaming worldwide concerns (citizenship education, education for sustainable development, etc.). This array of proposals promoting equitable quality education supports democratization and extension of educational opportunities (e.g., nine to ten years of basic education).

• Progressive opening of the curricular structure toward activities defined at the school and local level, where the school plays a pivotal role in co-developing the curriculum institutionally and pedagogically[20]. This entails a fundamental change in the ways we understand teachers and their roles. Beatriz Avalos quite rightly says that «over the course of their lengthy teaching careers, educators have developed their own opinion about what to teach and what should be done»[21]. Teachers cannot be considered as mere implementers of others' designs and plans, disregarding their backgrounds, visions and feelings about educational and curricular reform.

• According to the comprehensive vision of the curriculum that we are suggesting, teachers are deeply involved in curricular change as co-developers, overcoming the traditional separation between design and implementation. Teachers become key historical actors who are irreplaceable for the necessary ample discussion about what curriculum is most appropriate to meet society's demands and expectations. If any educational reform is to succeed, teachers must participate in the conceptualization and definition of the curriculum's role in society. This does not imply simply accepting their visions, ideas and strategies, but rather recognizing their role, making it publicly clear for the many stakeholders in the educational system and outside the system, as a necessary starting-point to construct collectively curricular change.

• Ongoing renewal of approaches to teaching in order to center education on students' expectations and needs, to better address their diverse contexts and ways of

learning, closer to day-to-day situations. Undoubtedly, conceptualization and increasing use of competency-based approaches is crucial for renewing methodologies (e.g., designing criteria and components for formative evaluation), complemented by significant shifts in discipline categories (e.g., mathematical problem-solving in daily-life contexts, and the communicational approach in language teaching).

• Greater concern regarding the introduction of religious education in national curricula. A study by Jean-François Rivard and Massimo Amadio (2003) revealed that, in half of the 73 countries analyzed, religious education appears at least once in the class schedule during the first nine years of schooling, as either a required or an optional course[22]. A core question we might ask is how religious education can contribute to comprehensive citizen education in societies that understand laicism to mean respect for and safeguarding of diversities, under a series of universal shared values.

• The emphasis on multicultural education as a cross-cutting topic that may be approached through a group of disciplines under various formats (mandatory/elective). Generally multicultural issues are approached as part of a curriculum to promote the idea of «learning to get along with each other», renewing learning strategies and methodologies (e.g., developing competencies involving negotiation and peaceful conflict management skills).

Conceptualizing a glo-local curriculum regarding universal concerns and issues, competency-based, to seek the necessary balance and an enriching integration between national and global realities. This is possible if we understand that all the resources we can mobilize to develop competencies (e.g., values, attitudes, knowledge and skills) to address situations are historical and social construction for which the intention and meaning are defined by institutions and stakeholders dynamically and variably.

Competency-based approaches may be understood as possible progressive ways to achieve an inclusive curriculum, integrating, as Philippe Jonnaert[23] puts it, the curricular logic (resources and activities to cope competently with different types of situations), the learning logic (students developing competencies) and the logic of action in situations (applying competencies). Competency-based approaches involve developing actual capacities in effective terms, not virtual capacities in hypothetical terms.

An inter-regional comparative analysis of countries that have applied competency-based approaches[24] shows us, among other things:

• The need to discuss educational policy in depth, seriously and frankly addressing competency-based approaches, without dodging ideological considerations[25], but informed by data and evidence in order to clarify concepts and proposals. A competency-based approach can be a valid alternative to the notion of a curriculum as a plan of studies, providing an innovative way of conceiving and organizing discipline-contents, contributing to the development of individuals who are competent as autonomous, critical, assertive citizens. It challenges the traditional way of seeing the educational system as the sum of its sub-sectors, institutions, stakeholders and disciplines, encouraging discussion around cross-cutting themes of curricular development

viewed holistically. It also profoundly impacts the balance and distribution of power within the educational system and around it, by opening discussion up to include society, its requirements and needs, and tough-mindedly questioning any teaching that is limited to conveying information and knowledge by lecturing.

• Consolidation of competency-based approaches, mainstreamed to help conceptualize and define the foundations, goals, curricular structures, syllabus and institutional and pedagogical practices in schools and classrooms. Competencies are not defined in general, abstract terms as curricular orientations, but incorporated into all stages of curricular development, coherently reaching to the actual classroom.

• Conceptualizing learning situations as a strategy and an instrument to implement effectively a competency-based approach (Jonnaert, 2006[26] & Roegiers, 2007[27]). Quoting Jonnaert, «situations are the origin and criterion for competencies», but we have a long way to go before our competencies are driven by learning situations. Rather, the tendency has been to apply learning resources to situational problem-solving.

• The need to understand that learning situations are effective ways to select, mobilize and integrate lessons learned, linking curricular development to the challenges, concerns and situations of daily life. Students' expectations and needs are the focus of conceptualizing and defining situations, striving to grasp that students are not the objects of learning, but individuals who learn in diverse ways.

• Educational reforms based on competencies must include changes in teachers' profiles and roles, and support their ongoing professional development. One of the main obstacles to educational reforms has been and remains the unhealthy, ineffective lumping together of elementary and secondary education based on competency development, with teacher training curricula still heavily divided into subject disciplines and the transmission of information and knowledge.

## 5. Final Observations for Open Discussion

We may agree that media education is a core component of comprehensive citizen education, starting from very young ages, to help democratize society and educational opportunities. A citizen who has not been educated in the required competencies to understand, analyze or criticize the media is seriously hampered in attempting to wield citizen's rights or participate in society.

So, the challenge is not just to convey information about the media to young people, or to list good intentions about developing capacities and competencies regarding comprehensive citizen education. We must primarily think about the role, functions and implications of media instruction in terms of a) a long-term view of education; b) a curricular proposal that is inclusive of diversities —cultural, social and individual— reaching out to everyone and c) a series of competencies and knowledge comprising a concept of democratic citizenship, integrating local, national and global concerns, and explicitly addressing inter-relationships among political, economic, social and cultural dimensions of enforcing and enjoying rights.

A possible option to explore is mainstreaming media education through curriculum from elementary to the university within the framework of life-long learning, so students face the challenge of finding answers to learning situations linked to real life. Media education is not memorizing and repeating information or introducing concepts such as «current affairs» in study programmes regarding social science disciplines.

Mainstreaming is complex, long-term and requires solid curricular proposals, quality teacher training, and much coordination and group work among teachers. Breaking away from «excessive subject-oriented curricula» and teacher «isolationism» is a tough task, calling for time and patience, but it is essential to move toward an inclusive curriculum. It is possible to think about different ways of mainstreaming, for example, with more media education in those subjects related to communication and citizen education. What we feel would not be desirable would be to box it into a subject, because that would reduce and ignore its relevance to constructing and consolidating democratic societies.

## Notes

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[3] An international evaluation of knowledge and skills conducted by PISA/OECD in 2003 clearly indicates the considerable distance separating Latin America especially from Europe and, to a lesser degree, from the Asian countries. For example, on the Mathematics test, designed to assess skills as applied to daily life, the three Latin American countries involved finished last (Brazil, at the bottom with Indonesia and Tunisia), next-to-last (Mexico) and third-to-last (Uruguay, tied with Thailand) out of 40 countries. See OECD. (2004). First Findings of PISA 2003. Executive Summary. Paris: OECD. Chart 1; 9.

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[5] Moreno, J.M. (2008). Chapter 10 - Conclusiones. La dinámica del diseño y el desarrollo del currículo: escenarios para la evolución del currículo [Dynamics of Curricular Design and Development: Scenarios for Curriculum Evolution], in Benavot A. & Braslavsky C. (Eds.). El Conocimiento Escolar en una Perspectiva Histórica: Cambios de Currículos en la Educación Primaria [School Knowledge in Comparative and Historical Perspective. Changing Curricula in Primary and Secondary Education]. Buenos Aires: Granica; 332.

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[7] Braslavsky, C. (2002). The New Century's Change: New Challenges and Curriculum Responses. New Delhi: COBSE - International Conference.

[8] The IBE has produced a series of country case studies (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Guatemala, Lebanon, Mozambique, Northern Ireland, Rwanda and Sri Lanka) analyzing the role of educational policy changes in social and civic reconstruction and redefining national citizenship in the context of identity-based

conflicts. See: Tawil, S. & Harley, A. (Eds.) (2004). Studies in Comparative Education: Education, Conflict and Social Cohesion. Geneva: IBE-UNESCO.

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[11] Cox, C. (2006). Chapter 14. Cecilia Braslavsky y el currículo: reflexiones sobre la travesía de toda una vida en búsqueda de una educación de calidad para todos [Cecilia Braslavsky and the Curriculum: Reflections on the Journey of an Entire Lifetime in a Quest for Quality Education for All]. In: Benavot, A. & Braslavsky, C. (Eds.). (2008). El conocimiento escolar en una perspectiva histórica: cambios de currículos en la educación primaria y secundaria [School Knowledge in Comparative and Historical Perspective: Changing Curricula in Primary and Secondary Education]. Buenos Aires: Granica; 383-404.

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[13] On the basis of educational reforms that took place in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay, Jacinto and Freites Frey describe three ways to address a reform: 1) passive acceptance (following the letter but not the spirit); 2) creative adaptation (the new and the old is introduced in appropriate proportions in the school context); or 3) resistance, as mentioned in the text. See Jacinto, C. & Freites Frey, A. (2006). Ida y vuelta: política educativa y las estrategias de las escuelas secundarias en contextos de pobreza. Estudios de casos en América Latina [Back and Forth: Educational Policy and Strategies of Secondary Schools in Contexts of Poverty. Case Studies in Latin America]. (Prepared for the International Manual on school effectiveness, publication pending). Buenos Aires: IIEP.

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[17] The regional seminars held by the IBE since 1998 on curricular development and capacity-building have made it possible to identify many common elements among the regions of the world regarding curricular design, administration and evaluation. See IBE-UNESCO. (2005). A Community of Practice as a Global Network of Curriculum Developers: Framework Documents. Geneva: IBE-UNESCO. (www.ibe.unesco.org/COPs.htm).

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[19] Braslavsky, C. (2004). Op. cit.; 36-47.

[20] A study by the IBE (2002) about school schedules in 23 countries found 15 of them including a time slot for different options, elective disciplines and planning of school activities. See IBE-UNESCO, ABEGS (Cols.) (2002). A Review of Time Allocated to School Subjects: Selected Cases and Issues. Geneva: IBE-UNESCO.

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[25] In highly polarized, politicized scenarios, focused on neoliberal policies and their impact on education, discussions about competencies have tended to be mainly ideological and rhetorical. Competency-based approaches tend to be rejected, in some cases, with the excuse that they support neoliberal policies since they supposedly promote the development of capacities, skills and attitudes adapted to labor market requirements and, more generally, to the norms of the market economy and globalization. Such competencies, they argue, tend to accept the world as it is rather than promote critical thinking and individually or socially critical action.

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# 3. Media Education Issues for Professionals and Citizens. Bridging the Divides in Countries of the South

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## ABSTRACT

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) are imposing a radical reform in journalism and media education. Without a strategic, participatory pedagogical vision, journalism and media education will not work to the advantage of the project for a democratic and inclusive information society. By the same token, they will be unable to reduce the gap experienced world-wide between training and employment, nor will they have a positive impact on government or media operators' policies, nor on the practices of professionals and citizens, particularly in cyberspace. Journalists and the media occupy a decisive place in society and vis-à-vis the State, which calls for public policies for introducing media literacy education starting in elementary school. The media are a source of knowledge, a development tool, a citizenship matrix, a source for the construction of the «social being» and for peace. The ultimate issue is the advent of an inclusive information society, and particularly in the countries of the South, its solid emergence depends on an «emancipation journalism». This must be one of the primary objectives of media education.

## 1. Introduction

Journalism has been taught in the schools for less than one hundred years. Professional development and upgrading of skills for professionals in this sector have only been institutionalized in media sector businesses for the last five decades or so. Overall, the pace of reforms in these areas of education in the oldest and most prestigious educational institutions (concentrated in the North, in Europe and North America) has been quite slow compared to certain other curricula in the areas of what is considered human or social sciences. Quite often, reforms have been set out and even imposed by pure technological inventions, involving mechanical, technical or equipment procedures which allow contents to be manufactured (intellectually produced by journalists) and distributed. Consequently, when training or upgrading programmes were reformed or revised, they were often limited to new learning and skill sets in the areas of printing, audio and video recording, and the creation of images, composites of all types, colour manipulation, shape effects and special effects, etc.

This is increasingly the case for continuing education and skills upgrading for professionals. These programmes –when employers allow them on a more or less regular basis– are most often provided by salesmen after the purchase of new equipment and are for the simple purpose of familiarizing, or at best, for training journalists and other media personnel to the newly acquired technology. As a result, we have witnessed fewer in-depth reforms in the rules of writing, in the intrinsic conception of contents, genres and content objectives. Accordingly, such training targeted for journalism professionals or university teaching for journalism students, is very often deemed by media professionals and their employers as being out of sync or behind the times when compared to current or new journalism practices in the field, thanks particularly to new technological tools or unique innovations in content and form created by the professional as dictated by practice and practical experience.

At the same time, numerous observers, UN organizations and international specialized NGOs are reaching the same conclusion as these professional environments regarding the unsuitability of academic teaching and targeted professional training in contrast with the new media issues facing modern societies and their aspirations, which are increasingly shared around the world, by North and South alike. These aspirations are guided by the credo of democracy, values and human rights, which are also part of the universal objective of the «Information Society» in which the citizen becomes a full stakeholder, producing content and opinions himself, having access to all means of information and communication, even appropriating them, thanks to ICTs, satellite and digital broadcasts, the worldwide web and the opportunities for participation and interactivity that, in principle, these technologies provide to every user, in rich and poor countries alike.

Many analyses and criticisms in this regard are now calling for education in «citizen journalism», in other words, «emancipation journalism», concerned about proposing an alternative to classical journalism in the name of universal citizen values and an assumed commitment along these same lines, i.e. «media education», intended for current and future professionals and ordinary citizens alike, which must be

unwaveringly inspired by the great principles proclaimed by the international community (governments and civil society) during the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in 2003-05[1].

## 2. The Great Divide between Training and Employment

In 1999, a world study entitled «Training and Jobs in Communication» [Formation et emploi en communication] launched by ORBICOM, the network of UNESCO chairs in communication, emphasized quite specifically that the gap is growing between training offered and job market needs, especially with regard to advanced ICTs. The study offered the following observations: «The industrialized world, emerging economies and the developing world are facing the same challenges: adapting training to market needs, re-thinking education on the basis of the impact of information technologies on the communication professions, improving the infrastructure and facilitating access to training and education… The information technologies have radically transformed the nature of the information and communication professions –journalism, advertising, public relations, communication management and the rest. From now on, knowledge of the various operating systems, and the possibility of research on the internet are the prerequisites for access to the job market… How these professions are taught in universities and other training centres is crucial. Professionals who are already working need to upgrade and enhance their skills, and those leaving educational institutions must possess the necessary skills to find a job… The world-wide flow of information and data open new perspectives for the circulation of information and the expansion of trade, but they also cause a dread of cultural homogenization, the commercialization of knowledge, international crime and the non-authorized dissemination of intellectual property… The new information and communication technologies are therefore on policy-makers' agenda»[2].

The distinguishing feature of the need to reform journalism training, a need that has always existed, is the unprecedented pace at which technology and technical communication tools have evolved. If this evolution, with its subsequent advances in printing, radio, television, telephone and fax, has encouraged training institutions to attempt to catch up with the new know-how arising from these technical achievements, it seems right that with the ICT and cyberspace era, the necessity for reform has become an outright necessity for revolution, for calling into question everything about what is taught, from top to bottom, and their management and organizational frameworks. And this is true in both the North and South, in the so-called «info-rich countries» and «info-poor countries» alike. Therefore, the first lesson to be taken from this formidable evolution –which is not without threats for societies and individuals– is that from now on, media education must be more receptive and much more alert to the place of technology, equipment and their advances throughout the world. This is because we can no longer rely upon national or regional situations where one could be content to experience a technological age that more or less fulfils the role expected by the media in that setting, while other regions of the world operate in a different, more advanced technological age. For decades, for example, countries

of the South inhabited «Gutenberg's Galaxy» with their heat printed newspapers, along side the media in the North which had already moved on to cold printing. But nowadays, audiovisual technology in the South can no longer delay moving from analogue to digital signals, without the risk of being excluded from all communication, not only with the rest of the world, but also with the risk of being cut off from all audiences at home, within the same country, because a supply of digital equipment is flooding the country, and is favouring globalization and the liberalization of cross-border trade of all goods, including communications equipment. In short, learning about communication is increasingly defined by the threshold of learning about technology. This new paradigm must therefore govern all reflection on developing journalism and communication educational curricula and upgrading modules.

## 3. Issues of the «Information Society»

The challenge that these technologies pose for learning and upgrading skills in journalism, and naturally, the teaching of these materials is in fact a challenge that exceeds the mandate of the educational institutions and the media themselves. As we know, and as was greatly demonstrated and commented upon by governments, civil societies and private operators during WSIS (2003-05), this challenge has been set before all cultures and all their teaching and learning tools in all areas of human knowledge. The «information society» as the future in motion for all humanity, with its immeasurable diversity, calls for a revolution in the contents, forms and teaching methods in all areas of knowledge, in all occupations and professions such that, with regard to journalism, which is much more involved with these new information and communication technologies, the challenge is global and systemic, and demands that contents, forms and practices of what is taught to learners in the area be radically re-engineered. It could even be said in this regard that the teaching of journalism and communication has inherited a position which, from now on, will be crucial and decisive in the project for tomorrow's «information society».

Never have the media and communications had to take this type of position and play this type of role in the future and development of societies, their cultures and economies alike. For example, it is now a known reality that this sector can generate nearly half or more of the wealth of certain so-called «info-rich countries». In the «info-poor countries» of the South, we are witnessing a rampant monopoly of these technologies in the so-called «informal» economic sector which, in a good number of these countries, occupies most young people, who are often unemployed, often with diplomas or school drop-outs. In Dakar, Casablanca, Cape Town or Cairo, it may well happen that a journalism instructor, a journalist or journalism student is required to turn to a nearly illiterate youth, who is self-taught in ICT, to solve a computer connection problem, problems related to a pirated digital satellite signal or code conversion of language platforms from different origins.

The paradox is instructive: technological know-how can be acquired elsewhere than in schools, without teachers with degrees, without academically validated instruction, and still be useful, productive and generate content and wealth! Now an

ordinary citizen can have professional ICT know-how! In the big cities of some countries of the South, «electronic flea markets» are being created to deal in ICTs, cell phones, satellite and digital television; they are being presided over with flair and resourcefulness by these young people that have been marginalized by the education system. They are in Casablanca (the Derb Ghallef market), in Dakar (Colobane market), in Niamey (Katako market and the Central market), in Conakry (Madina market), etc.

Compared to these informal schools, what will remain for the journalism schools, the journalist's professional development centre, and their teachers if the teachers are no longer the first disseminators of knowledge, practical applications and resourcefulness in the area of communication and its tools and technologies?!

Besides, it is now well established that educational and training institutions, and the media themselves, are equally faced with the decline of their domination and exclusive legitimacy in the dissemination of communication knowledge and practices, vis-à-vis cyberspace. The blogosphere that this new universal space nurtures and develops among ordinary citizens, whether or not they understand the rules of journalism, sometimes even using rudimentary language which despite everything, enables them to deliver their messages and even to shake up the news scene, political elites and even justice... In the Arab and African worlds, for example, there are increasing numbers of blogs: they're the talk of the town with scoops (that are often reprehensible from the professional and ethical perspective). The blogs incur the wrath of political stakeholders, lobbies and courts, which often sentence the bloggers to imprisonment –thought to have been the exclusive «privilege» of veteran professional journalists! Countless bloggers and internet users have been troubled by their countries' authorities, or punished to greater or lesser degrees by the courts in Morocco, Mauritania, Algeria, Tunisia, Senegal, Niger, Syria, Egypt, Jordan…

When all is said and done, the practice of journalism stemming in principle from standardized learning through recognized programmes, finds itself, with this new technology situation and the broad and universal access it permits, outside the walls of schools and university faculties, in the core of the city and everyday key activities: political, economic, social, cultural, normative and ethical activities... It is therefore impossible to ignore this conclusion: in the end, learning journalism has an impact on collective life from the fact that the media-based act has earned a deciding place in the city and thus in governance and «living together». This is testified by the role these technologies play in the world terrorism phenomenon against which the entire international community is mobilized. From this perspective, journalism schools and the continuing education centres for professionals are more than ever concerned by government policies, and likewise, by the other stakeholders who participate in the emergence of the information society, namely, the media (public and private) and civil society, that is to say, ultimately, the citizen.

This relevance or importance of journalists and the media for the government explains public policies that are increasingly elaborate and widespread, which aim to introduce media literacy education starting in elementary school. The media are a source of knowledge, a tool for development, a citizenship matrix, a source of civic-

mindedness, construction of the «social being», construction of peace… But there is a fundamental area where the journalism school has everything for inspiring and influencing public policy: its own domain, the domain of expression in general and expression through the means of communication, traditional and new media, or ICTs. The specific issue here, in addition to the global societal issues already alluded to, is the advent of the «information society» which is in motion in cyberspace, under digital rule, on a planet-wide scale and which is expected to anchor the values of democracy and citizenship that this credo proclaims for all peoples.

### 4. The Teaching of Journalism: An Issue Left out of the World Summit (WSIS)

During WSIS (2003-05), media professionals and world civil society organizations regretted and condemned the fact that the organizers had only given them a minor part in the formal discussions and the various round tables on internet governance. This absence of the main players involved, namely, the media and media professionals, from the group that was given responsibility by the United Nations Secretary General to study the governance of the internet is symptomatic and impairs from the outset the international community's opportunities to inaugurate a fair and equitable communication order within the information society that is developing around the world and which involves all citizens, media audiences, media and ICT users! As for the schools and instructors, they simply were not visible in the Summit's corridors or around its debate and discussion tables, although the state of affairs of training (somewhat present however during this summit through the researchers and academic theorists) is central to internet governance, at least from the critical and ethical perspective[3].

There is no choice but to observe that, more than five years after Geneva (2003), only some regional organizations, outside the UN system (like EuroMed) or certain civil society groups like the Centre de Protection des Journalistes (CPJ) and the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), are interested in the issue of media teaching, training and literacy. It should be noted, however, that the UN agency responsible for culture and education, UNESCO, got in depth reflection going by experts on the matter very early on, when Round 1 of WSIS was being planned. It should be pointed out first of all that this quality expertise led, for example in 2007, to determining a model programme, a list of evaluation criteria, and the designation of centres of excellence in Africa[4].

There is all the more reason why this significant trail-blazing effort by UNESCO should be pointed out, as this organization was not given the place it deserved and claimed in the WSIS content work and preparations. Because everyone remembers that questions about infrastructure, equipment, funding and incentive training for private operators regarding government prerogatives largely dominated the Summit in Geneva, often to the detriment of debates on the complexity and diversity of contents. Civil society, often encouraged by UNESCO's motivation and involvement, was, certainly, able to lead round tables and debates on this matter, especially in Tunis (2005),

but for all that, without subsequent or adequate impact on the texts finally approved by the government (the Summit Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action)…

Apart from an indirect mention of media literacy education in points C9 and C10 of the WSIS Plan of Action, from the perspective of ethics and the purposes of ICT uses, no reflection on ICT content, whether as diagnosis or as prospective, was able to be carried out nor clearly retained in this summit's recommendations and findings. Now, no reflection on the future of the information society can be conducted without seriously addressing the matter of training the human resources, i.e. the effect that education has on the media. Such a reflection must place journalism instruction and media literacy at the foundations of this issue, for the benefit of the professionals and their audiences. Essentially, the role and place of educational institutions in the media scene and in the future of these fields, depending on the countries and contexts, and in compliance with national strategies that the governments have undertaken to respect and agreed to deploy in the strategic overview outlined by WSIS are some of the issues that should be covered in this reflection. Accordingly, never have the educational institutions and their practices been so tied to the future of the media and communication scene, at the national, regional and world levels alike.

Well before WSIS, these institutions already had influence on these scenes with regard to professional profiles, choices and options by media companies, related to contents and equipment, as well as to public policy in certain countries. This is particularly true in public journalism educational institutions which dominate this training sector in the countries in the South even though they are not the only ones responsible for it, because in these countries there are few structures dedicated to ongoing training or professional upgrading, and it is even rarer still to find permanent units with these types of objectives within media sector businesses. This continuing education obligation has not yet emerged as a standard, permanent and consistent claim among professionals, or as a confirmed commitment on the part of employers. It must also be borne in mind that there is little outreach in these countries between the professional media world and the world of media education and training, meaning media literacy education encompassing the broadest range including the training of future journalists in institutions and faculties, skills upgrading for professionals, and the various types of instruction that could benefit ordinary citizens.

This deficiency should be analyzed and addressed at many levels by various means. But it remains without the shadow of a doubt, in the Arab world in particular and the African world in general, that the origin of this deficiency should be sought in these institutions' government status, which is marked by bureaucratic routine, endless reproduction of the same models and little tendency to reform. This state of affairs explains, for example, the great backwardness, indeed, the failure of universities in these countries. Universities, which by their place and symbolism in the world of education and learning in general, necessarily have an impact on the approaches and practices of every other stakeholder delivering any other targeted, professional training. This situation is more specifically the result of two major dysfunctions: one with regard to training and the second with regard to learning content.

## 5. The Necessary Symbiosis between the Instructor and the Professional

Regarding human resources, public journalism educational institutions inherit deficiencies from the universities in these countries of the South. Primarily lacking, if not non existent, are programmes and incentives in the area of professional development and skills upgrading for instructors. The university instructor in these countries is essentially a civil servant like any other, which is to say, in general, a bureaucrat. He endlessly does the same tasks until retirement and has a stable job while he also seeks not to cause any other expense to the government in addition to his salary. In other words, nearly systematically, the journalism and communication instructor is perceived and managed by his administration –the government– in the same way that the philosophy, literature or constitutional law instructor is. No consideration to speak of is accorded to the evolutionary nature of his subject, to the unending tidal wave of new information and communication technologies and their transfer to teaching in the form of educational content and practical applications.In addition, the instructor in these institutions is also under-motivated in the area of research and the very specific, expensive and demanding contents in terms of follow-up and skills upgrading –in other words, reform. In the Arab universities, research is nearly insignificant, forgotten/neglected by these institutions' only funding agency: the State. And yet, research is not only the right path for keeping abreast of knowledge and tools in this area, but also for applying new approaches to it with regard to training content and teaching processes that must adapt as new technologies and innovations evolve.

During the second round of WSIS in Tunis (2005), on the occasion of a forum organized by UNESCO about the UNESCO Chairs, regarding the Arab university and its use of ICTs, tools that are omnipresent in the field of communication, it was pointed out that: «For the last twenty years, the Arab post-secondary education system has been in a constant state of reforms, both major and minor, one after another, occurring in such a way that no country in the region has been able to benefit from the positive elements that a stable system allows in its choices and practice traditions for years on end, offering the benefits of a rooted institutionalization and an accumulation of tested practices, canons and codes of conduct, and relations with society, particularly in the area of research which interests us here, especially in relation to use of ICTs… From a pedagogical perspective and the knowledge content circulating within the university, we note that content and methods that do not incorporate ICTs still primarily dominate; that ICTs are not integrated often except in certain disciplines (some physical sciences, journalism, architecture, marketing and advertising) and that e-learning is an «adventure» that very few Arab universities allow themselves and not always with the necessary creativity or regularity. Moreover, another significant obstacle experienced by Arab universities, starting with the faculty chairs, can be connected to the reason why e-learning and distance learning in general are used so infrequently: the lack of research, standards, automated solutions and protocols necessary for the Arabic language to adapt to ICTs and make full use of all the opportunities, following the example of the two or three other high-performance languages in the world… Another handicap on which light is rarely shed though it is manifest in the Arab reality: there are still many, if not an overwhelming majority in

certain countries, university instructors –potentially researchers– whose training has not incorporated ICTs. This is not solely a generational problem but also the problem of a system that does not adequately update its instructors' profiles and promotions in this regard, and also a problem of willingness both on the part of the instructor and his university: the former does not wish to undertake learning ICTs and the latter does not push him and does not systematically help him in this direction»[5].

The reference to distance learning must be noted here, as it is a highly consistent and effective means for providing skills upgrading opportunities for media professionals as well as media education for communities or groups of citizens. The university, by virtue of its prestige and reference expertise, certainly has a role to play, if not a determining role, in the spread and perfecting of e-learning among all stakeholders whatsoever involved in delivering educational content, to professionals, for example, as well as to citizens wishing to use the media - school and university students, community media, internet users, bloggers, etc.

Furthermore, due to the thinness and weakness of the media scenes in countries in the South, and their bureaucratic natures, journalism instructors rarely have symbiotic relationships with the professional media world. The institutions, which employ them on academic and government administration-type criteria (holding a doctorate), are usually incapable of providing their tenured professors and students the benefit of what professionals can contribute, through courses, workshops or ad hoc collaboration in practical applications. This means that the professional is rarely involved with allowing these institutions to benefit from his experience and raising its awareness to the expectations and demands of the professional world. The result is that the instructor with degrees is for all practical purposes, cut out of the professional milieu, condemned to delivering to his journalism students, know-how that has been made obsolete by the practices in the field, outside the school… Over time, this gap diminishes the institution's credibility and supposed ability to attract journalism candidates, and by the same token, professionals seeking to upgrade their skills. One of the harmful consequences for the media field in general is often the anarchical and illegitimate occupation of this journalism and communication training niche by private companies that will use every marketing and public relations business trick to claim that they are offering more «practical» training, in sync with the profession's reality in the field. There is first and foremost concern that in these types of private schools, the students are encountering and listening to professionals who, apart from their profession, have neither the vocation nor the ability to be teachers. At the end of this type of, frankly, «cut-rate» private training, which nonetheless is quite costly for students' parents, the national scene inherits cohorts of journalists with training that is dubious, incomplete and highly deficient in professionalism, and consequently, in ethics and ethical behaviour. This is increasingly borne out and routine in countries like Morocco, Jordan, Tunisia, Lebanon, Senegal, the Ivory Coast, Mauritania, etc.

It is also appropriate to notice that the harmful gap in training that is taking hold between instructors and professionals can be explained in part, by the instructor's educational profile, as often, the instructor in this type of institution is recruited on the

basis of advanced university degrees, and has not had, at the same time, a career in the profession. In Morocco and Tunisia, for example, the oldest and most renowned institutions in Maghreb and Sub-Saharan Sahel, you can count on your fingers the professors who also have solid media experience. In short, various basic data, inherent to the university situation and its procedures and practices, compete in the countries of the South, ultimately, to create this divide between the public institution and the media sector, between the instructors and the professional journalists, and between the professional journalists and their audiences. For its part, the private institution, which is often inferior to the university, generates profiles that are highly deficient in serious, solid training for professionalism and «citizen journalism» or «emancipation journalism», which the media in these countries have a fundamental need for to be able to enjoy a media scene that promotes modernity and democracy.

## 6. Conclusion: A Strategic Vision for «Citizen Journalism»

What should be blamed in this regard in these academic institutions, as much as in most professional skills upgrading structures and ad hoc citizen media literacy modules (both quite rare in countries of the South), is the absence of an instructional project that is participatory, in other words, open to the media, media professionals, and their audiences; open to the absolute necessity of instructors periodically being immersed in professional media environments for purposes of upgrading their skills. The educator's pedagogical training in media literacy must therefore be designed to be quite flexible, able to constantly reform itself to follow the frenzied evolution of needs, expectations, tools and practices of the media, media professionals and citizens in general, as best and as quickly as possible. Naturally, this requires incorporating very specific curricula and training modules, that are open to this requisite flexibility, and mindful of being interactive with appropriate policies in the field at all levels: content production, choice and use of technology, media objectives in terms of target audiences and aspirations that are in sync with a vision for a society that promotes democratic and citizen participation values, like the «information society» project. The foundations of this type of curricula and training must be characterized by awareness and flexibility. They need to be attuned to technological innovation, to professionals and their practices, citizens' practices, social transformations that these habitual practices induce and delineate in the present and for the future of the citizen and society in general. They also need to be attuned to research and theories related to pedagogical applications to be able ultimately to deliver this knowledge and know-how in a way that is efficient, modern, participatory and inclusive. The ultimate objective is to provide a media education that leads to the emergence of an «emancipation journalism», an alternate journalism intended for the citizens and not consumers of information which is, unfortunately, in the North and South alike, most often superficial, without background, and voluntarily chosen and dealt with for its entertainment or sensational content. From this standpoint, a large portion of media education will consist of delivering and producing «citizen journalism» and therefore of designing media education that assigns to the media at least four functions in countries in the South:

• To collaborate and participate in promoting the ideals and objectives of development, strengthening public interest.

• To fulfil the traditional role of «watch dog» for monitoring governance; to be open to, with inquiry and critical approach, bodies of citizen representation (parliament, local elites, etc.).

• To help with the creation and consolidation of public debate between the State or its institutions (government, parliament) and citizens by informing citizens completely and responsibly so that they are able to fully benefit from their role as citizens and so that they make substantiated and well-informed decisions.

• To act as a critical and objective leader of democratic debate and not as a biased party to this debate, so that the values of independence, diversity, pluralism and tolerance are fundamentally respected.

«Citizen journalism» of this type must also take advantage of the opportunities offered by ICTs for expanding the «public forum» so that the maximum number of citizens (internet users, bloggers, «community media citizen journalists», minorities, etc.) dialogue, exchange and participate more in public life and the development of their society through cyberspace and the blogosphere. This will also reduce the omni-presence of authorized channels and their flow of information which is not very open to interactivity, as well as the «digital divide» and the «digital solitude» that ICTs establish by isolating the individual in front of his satellite television screen or computer connected to the internet. Such is the full meaning of a media education that promotes «public or citizen journalism»: «When public journalism is effective, it leaves something behind –a conversational effect, at the least, and, at best, an ongoing structure for citizen engagement»[6].

To develop this type of media education content for various target audiences, from journalism students to citizens, by way of the professionals, it is absolutely necessary that content be flexible and constantly open to innovations in tools and practices, open to the professionals and their contributions of expertise, open to the ideas and ambitions of instructors and researchers, open to the brainwaves and uses of citizens who are media and ICT-savvy. This requires academic freedom which must be encouraged by educational institutions' decision makers. In this area, the instructor is increasingly learning from his students, and will perform at a higher level if he considers the renewal of his skills and strategies that he gains from egalitarian exchanges with his students. The teaching process must therefore also become «grassroots», that is, open to the student's contribution and participation. This type of process assumes a fundamental strategic pedagogical vision that must essentially rest on the need to change the way of looking at the teaching of journalism and media education. We are no longer in a classroom where the professor lectures; we are now in a laboratory where a work and research leader/coordinator leads and regulates and has the great responsibility of properly validating new practices and communication technology innovations in order not to be sanctioned by having his product rejected in the employment market nor to be lost by the evolution of phenomena. These

phenomena shape, shake and nurture a society that from now on is more open than ever to access to the world of media thanks to ICTs and the internet. But at the foundation of the institution's and instructors' aspirations there must be voluntarism, on the part of all stakeholders in the pedagogical act, with regard to media policies and decision-makers. They need to face the challenges communication technologies place before society as well as the reservations and traditions rooted in professional environments and, by the same token, the reluctance of citizens who have been kept well away, for far too long, from access to, and use of, the media.

## Notes

[1] To refer to the 2003 WSIS Geneva Declaration of Principles (www.itu.int/wsis/docs/geneva/official/dop-fr.html) (re-read in particular point B4 of this declaration pertaining to «Capacity Building»).

[2] «Connecting Knowledge in Communications: New Partnerships in Communication For the 21st Century: Strategies For Governance, Technology, Employment and Lifelong Learning. Proceedings of the international conference: April 14-17, 1999, Montreal, Canada. Editors: Claude-Yves Charron, Maria Camila Chica, Sheryl N. Hamilton; translation, Anne-Karine Brodeur. Montreal: Orbicom, International Network of UNESCO Chairs in Communications, International Secretariat [1999]. French, English and Spanish versions. (www.orbicom.ca).

[3] In 2007, a symposium of international experts in Strasbourg studied the «ethical dimensions of the information society» by reference to point C10 of the Plan of Action adopted by the Geneva Summit (C10: The Information Society should be subject to universally held values and promote the common good and to prevent abusive uses of ICTs.) This symposium (June 14-15, 2007) was organized at the initiative of the Centre d'études et de recherches interdisciplinaires sur les médias en Europe (CERIME) of the Université Robert Schuman and the UNESCO/Orbicom Chair «Pratiques journalistiques et médiatiques» [journalism and Media Practices] of the Université R. Schuman. Proceedings of the symposium are in printing. (www.-urs.u-strasbg.fr) (www-cerime.u-strasbg.fr).

[4] «Criteria and Indicators for Quality Journalism, Training Institutions and Identifying Potential Centres of Excellence in journalism Training in Africa». (2007). UNESCO's Series on journalism education by Prof. Guy Berger and Corinne Matras in association with The School of Journalism and Media Studies, Rhodes University, South Africa and École Supérieure de Journalisme de Lille (ESJ). Paris: UNESCO; 56. (www.unesco.org).

[5] UNESCO at the World Summit on the Information Society, The Round Table on «The Role of UNESCO in the Construction of Knowledge Societies Through UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme», Proceedings. Tunis 16-18 November 2005. Paris: UNESCO. (www.unesco.org/education).

[6] Austin, L. (2002). «Public Journalism in the Newsroom: Putting the Ideas into Play». www.impd.org/artman/publish/printer_87.shtml.

# 4. Media Education as a Development Project: Connecting Emancipatory Interests and Governance in India

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ABSTRACT

The recent explosion of communication tools and services within last two decades has posed new questions that are beyond the comprehension of existing pedagogy in Indian communication studies. Indian society has witnessed a widespread proliferation of media technologies to such an extent that they have become ubiquitous in society. However, media education, in India, remains an almost unexplored area of studies. This contribution analyzes the reasons for this lack of interest in light of the international research debate. It also considers alternatives to a Western view of media literacy, based on Sen's concepts of «capabilities» and «functionings». It shows the advantages of articulating emancipatory interests and media governance but considers also the local limitations of such an enterprise, if media education is not recast in new pedagogies and profound educational reform, that extends beyond the child to the whole of society.

KEY WORDS

Media technologies, media education, research, social responsibility, capability, development.

## 1. Media Literacy as a Non-Priority

Media education as a field of enquiry has received less scholarly attention among pupils and pedagogues in Indian society than other fields. Although there are stray writings and projects initiated by international bodies like UNESCO, it has rarely gained academic acclaim or collective concern. Though the field has been the object of critical attention and academic debates across the world, it seems that the prefix of «media» to education has foreclosed any scholarly attention in India. When the idea of media education as a subfield of education has been recognised, at best, it has been dismissed as too elitist a proposition, especially in a society where quite a substantial amount of the population is yet to enjoy the privilege of basic and elementary education. For historical reasons, education was denied across caste groups in Indian Society. Only the upper echelons of the caste groups had access to reading and writing. Since independence, efforts have been made by various governments to introduce a variety of schemes to reach the larger society by making them literate. The recent countrywide total literacy campaign «Sarva Shiksya Abhiyan» is a programmed effort in that direction. Much energy has been invested by the governments of the day to reach the weaker sections of society by initiating the ability to read and write. But they have not explored alternative avenues to make the people media literate contrary to other areas of technology where there are attempts to leapfrog and catch up with the West.

In the recent years Indian society has undergone a transition from print literacy to electronic visual mode. These transitions are not to be seen and read as replacement of one mode with the other, instead, there is an overlapping of both. Further, the recent explosion of communication has seen the society moving from media scarcity to media abundance. All these developments have lost sight by the policymakers or the policy makers have made it, like in other fields, a mere resource allocation and distribution. Consequently, the supply of audiovisual aids to the existing pedagogy in the school education received priority. Media Education as a distinctive pedagogy in its own right has been rarely realised and understood in Indian society. The recent debates about inclusion of ICTs in the school curriculum did not deal with how to make the children learn or read and write through ICTs but with how it would be an addition to the conventional classical learning system in schools. While the conventional learning system is yet to reach the length and breadth of the country, the sudden haste for initiating ICTs in school can be explained by the state eagerness not to miss the requirements of ICT skilled manpower for future demands in the world. Despite the recognized rigour and seriousness of the field, at best, it has been incorporated as education technology for teaching purposes or used for teaching the grammar of the medium by various media schools and departments in the universities to produce a trained labour force for the growing requirements of the media industry in India.

The recent explosion of communication tools and services within the last two decades has posed new questions that are beyond the comprehension of existing pedagogy in Indian communication studies. Indian society has witnessed a widespread proliferation of media technologies to such an extent that they have become ubiquitous

in society. In this media saturated environment nobody can avoid some contact or other with some form of media. In fact, it has become a part of life that knowingly or unknowingly affects people's daily experiences and understanding of the world around them. Different media like the press, television, radio, Internet, cell phone technologies and other ICTs superimpose upon one another and collectively contribute to the production and expansive circulation of text, visual, sound, multimedia and all the other products that Indians encounter as media messages in their day to day life. While the access to different media, the vast choices in the media itself, as well as the global flow of communication undoubtedly offers great opportunities, it also poses many challenges to a developing society and an expanding market.

These transformations, pertaining to the structures of communication and processes constituting them, continue to imprint various facets of contemporary India. What attracts attention is the lack of awareness among the citizenry regarding the emerging challenges posed incrementally in various domains –by the state, within the market and in civil society–, engulfed as they variedly are in the evolving dynamics of communication. Further, the trade organizations representing the so-called new media –IT, Mobile Telecom & Internet– include representatives of the service sector, more than those of manufacturers. While some of these existed in a muted or dormant form from the early 1980s on (such as those of hardware / component manufacturers and software producers), they were tremendously boosted with the Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation (LPG) policies of the early 1990s. Thus, such trade bodies like NASSCOM (National Association of Software and Service Companies) and MAIT (Manufacturer's Association for Information Technology) appear comparatively stronger and more vibrant than before; others like ISPAI (Internet Service Providers Association of India) & COAI (Cellular Operators Association of India) –a response to the advent of new techno-commercial landscape– were born and grew rapidly by riding the wave of the so called «communication revolution» of the late 1990s.

The trade bodies representing sectors that today are in private hands were for long under government control. In sectors like TV, Radio & Telecom that were monopolised by the government, private producers –involved in varied capacities– had a sparse set of issues around which common cause could be built and policy measures could be shaped. Not only have these emerged as major lobby groups today, but they also have grown in number– something indicative of the complex and rival interests that have emerged within concerned communication sectors, the most prominent being trade bodies representing «national» and «international» television broadcasters.

This evolution has created a scenario wherein the priorities and emphases of trade bodies –not to forget, their degree of transparency– have come to vary tremendously. Moreover, there are differences in the ways in which trade bodies in different sectors view and act upon matters of governance, as much within their respective sectors as, in their interaction with the state and in response to global/ multi-lateral organisations (ITU, WTO, WIPO, UNCTAD). These phenomena

have, in turn, tended to determine the extent to which trade bodies have proved to be successful in shaping public policy, be it together with, or independent of, state instruments.

Today sector-specific trade bodies provide a platform for private players in the communication industry to protect and further their interests, advocate best practices, mediate between several domestic and trans-national stakeholders, and impress upon public policy through the legal juro-administrative mechanisms of the state. Beyond such trade bodies, the proactive role of specialised cells dealing with the communication industry within APEX trade industry associations (CII, FICCI, ASSOCHAM) can also be observed. Perhaps their most significant role is to provide a forum to address contentious issues within the communication industry, especially those where the interest of specific sectors run contrary to those of others, such as CDMA Vs GSM, Mobile Vs Internet telephony.

The changing structure of the media calls for a serious reconceptualisation of the place of media in society and consequently of media education policies. The new institutional structures are not yet completely crystallised, but it is clear that they will involve a range of actors and will transcend national borders. At this point, the only actor that has been managing to pursue an agenda with anything approaching consistency is the trans-national corporate media; concrete policy developments at every level are still being driven essentially by economic concerns.

While it is undoubted that recent innovations and applications of communication technology have opened and widened possibilities for expression and information, if civil society in India is not careful, freedom from state control will be replaced by an insidious form of corporate control. Unlike the state, corporations are not directly accountable to citizens, i.e. neither are their performance regularly validated through electoral processes nor is even a minimal level of transparency feasible through legal instruments. With radical changes in economic policy and priorities in the early 1990s, serendipitously overlapping with the emergence of new technologies of informatics and media, a new institutional dynamics has begun to emerge, placing media under the civil eye.

There is a need to set the question of media policy on the public agenda. But more often than otherwise, the notion of media policy is conceptualised as though it were limited to the government or/and other formal apparatus of the state. It is not limited to that alone. Indeed, with the state's retreat from public policy involvement, media policy is being increasingly handled on the periphery of formal state concerns. Media industries have made this sector one of the most lucrative and important growth areas of global capitalism, and they do not hesitate to undertake the political activity necessary to promote their interests.

This changing media scenario is also heavily marked by some paradoxical trends: tensions between the heavily media saturated urban areas and the relatively less media engaged rural areas, between globalization and localization, between privatization and commercialization between state control and private sector control. There is a

veritable volley of information and media messages that individuals face in the shape of printed news, films, soap operas, information in 24 hours TV channels, in the Internet, in the multiple radio channels, across the breadth of the country. The information is knowingly or unknowingly used in many ways. It is applied in deciding and setting crucial democratic issues, in practices related to governance. In some unfortunate times, information is reduced to moral panicking, sensationalization of news, riots and violence in the name of religion, caste and other differences.

In their everyday life, Indians need to build up a critical engagement with media. Especially so, because media have come to affect their social experiences, political consciousness, and the construction of knowledge, relaying dominant definitions as well as communicating cultural expressions and meanings. Unquestionably then, one needs to pay attention to the specific forms of media as well as finer nuances in terms of the organization of national and private media systems, the process of media production and the way they articulate both with the public and the state. A focus of this kind opens grounds into the questions of the process of media production, its constraints and benefits in a democratic set up, the cultural expressions and meanings that are offered by various media and questions of public interpretations of media messages. While some of these issues are dealt with in the social sciences, the case needs to be made for a more specific examination of issues of communication, culture and their implication in education and a larger institutional incorporation of a critical intellectual engagement with these issues. In this context, media education is one of the main fields that specifically deals with a theoretical, philosophical and empirical engagement with these issues.

## 2. The Need for Media Education, in a Non Elitist Perspective

The development of print media led to the standardization of formal communication of knowledge and meanings. With the introduction of compulsory formal education, print literacy became a prerequisite to receive knowledge and ideas that were produced and retained in written form. This representation of reality through the printed words has undergone vast changes with the development of other kinds of visual and electronic media. Still one might argue that printed communication is considerably important considering that communication through computers or Internet is still beyond the reach of millions of people at least in the developing world. One might feel that studies of these forms of communication and its social implications might be elitist. However, today, it is not merely the text that represents reality with the intention of communication, but a wide combination of sounds, texts, and images.

This combination of different media generates representations that convey a sense of «naturalness» of media messages, as the representations are closer to the realities than what they actually represent. In such a scenario, how does one begin to engage critically with the media and understand their impact on society? Media education as an intellectual and critical engagement helps people make a better sense of the different media products available. In this media saturated environment, the

boundaries of formal education are merely confined to a concept of literacy that stresses proficiency in reading, writing and speaking need to be reconsidered. One of the main reasons is that individuals need to be equipped to deal with the vast amount of knowledge that circulates in this media rich environment. So, the very concept of education itself goes into some serious reappraisal when considering the importance of media products.

In India, however, the fact remains that as for now it is an almost unexplored area of studies. Locating media education within pedagogies of learning is a difficult task particularly because the field of enquiry has had very different approaches with respect to various locales and prevailing education systems. Again, the task itself becomes a challenging engagement because the theoretical underpinning of the field has developed very differently. Besides, the majority of the works seems to be focused on discussion of empirical aspects of media education. One cannot clearly distinguish areas of media education as separate from the areas of media studies and as subjects that deal with the media. They are interdependent. Conceptual approaches to media education differ from locale to locale and also in terms of curricula, philosophy and pedagogy (Kubey, 2001).

Media education also requires not only carefully thought out empirical work and approaches but also an examination of the educational and theoretic assumptions that underlie the pedagogy of each approach, for instance the role of media itself or the nature of audience etc. To consider media education more closely, one has to begin also with interrogating the theoretical foundations of educational practices. In Great Britain, for instance, one finds the cultural studies approach to media analysis and media education in which the audience is seen as actively negotiating texts, constructing their social worlds and identities through active engagement with the media (Buckingham & Sefton-Green, 2001). Australia has been the first country where media education has been made mandatory and part of schooling from kindergarten through twelfth grade (Quin & McMahon, 2001).

Len Masterman provides a comprehensive view of the development of the history of media education. According to him, the origins of media education were in the 1930s and the first phase of the subject's development lasted till about the early1960s. Media education started out as a defensive and paternalist movement, as education against the media for it encouraged children to develop discrimination by differentiating between the authentic «high» cultures and the debased, anti-cultural values of largely commercial mass media (Leaves and Thompson, 1948, in Masterman, 2001). The second phase of media education evolved out of the Popular Arts movement (Hall & Wahnnel, 1964, in Masterman, 2001). With developments in film theory, the question of «value» still remained central and discrimination within and not against the media became a primary objective. In the 1970s, media education began to base itself broadly on «culturalist» concerns and was influenced by developments in the field of semiotics, theories of ideology, and the social context of production and consumption. In the 1980s, media research reconceptualized media audiences by systematically linking them to cultural codes related to socioeconomic

positions or subcultural positions which had till then been neglected in media research. The implications for media education were that it began to move from an almost exclusive attention to textual meanings to considering issues of the sense made of the texts by different audiences (Masterman, 2001: 23-39).

While this overview captures the trajectory of media education in developed countries, it also reflects the scholarship in communication studies that informs the contours and growth of media education as a discipline in the developed countries. On the contrary, there is no connection between media education and communication scholarship in India, although, as a social phenomenon, communication has been well integrated into people's everyday lives. It has received much less attention in terms of habits of analysis and exegesis. Moreover, theorising communication has been driven less by intellectual curiosity than by value commitments and ideas benefit to individuals or society. As a result, there could be no unified body of normative theory because of the diversity of values and aspirations of theorists and their followers. Communication and media theorists in India have embraced a notion of communication that emerged from national reconstruction and was based upon a sense of social responsibility among social scientists. It undermined the role of culture that was the basis of its foundation, and adopted instead a pragmatic approach for national reconstruction. The role of culture was sidelined in the development project (Das, 2005).

Thus, the trends during the 1960s and 1970s broadly reflected concerns for national reconstruction as well as national integration (Melkote, 1991; Vilanilam, 1993: 142-164). A sense of urgency directed the research about the processes of mass communication and their effects upon society, which required explanations and solutions to a variety of social, political and economic problems for a growing nation. The perspectives of communication studies were those of mainstream social science research. Both relied on a pragmatic model of society, advocated modern individualistic values and were guided by instrumental efficiency.

The 1980s and 1990s projected a shift with the decline of state monopoly and the rise of market forces for disseminating communication and culture. Communication appeared less and less as a cultural proposition and became more and more a commodity for sale in the global world. The consequence was a reinforcement of a technocratic conception of communication in Indian society. The commercialisation of Indian communications radically questioned the autonomy of a Nation-state communication system. At the same time, the idea of a public service closely linked to that of public monopoly, was called into question. Furthermore, the emergence of new technologies projected the apparatus of communications into much more complex communication network systems. Such network systems are directly affected on the one hand by the structural transformation of international exchanges and, on the other hand, by the constant transformation and renewal of communication technology. As a result, communication becomes increasingly dependent on technological innovation, professional training and ideological control. Nevertheless, in recent years, more and more media entrepreneurs and stake holders have come up to compete

with their claims on the field, which are subject to scrutiny. For instance, the Southern part of India is spearheading the movement by introducing media education as a part of the school curriculum. Besides, a few higher institutions such as Jamia Millia Islamia University in Delhi have introduced it as a part of undergraduate curriculum. There are other states in India where it is yet to be part of the school curriculum, and it remains as a part of the extra curricular activities, outside school. But the field has gained significance among civil society groups such as Gandhian organisations, women's groups, SIGNIS and so on (Gonçalves, 1996; Scrampical & Joseph, 2000; Joshva & Kurian, 2005). Most of these organisations have developed media education kits for circulation. Similarly, the corporate houses such as «Times of India» and «Hindustan Times», two leading metro-based English newspapers, have not lagged behind. These foundations have initiated Newspapers In Education (NIE) to reach the schools in selected areas in India. These stakeholders have differing interests and visions. A detailed analysis of these efforts has yet to be undertaken.

Kumar (1999) captures the trends in the field and summarises them aptly in a fourfold typology: a) protectionist theory; b) critical autonomy theory; c) cognitive development theory; d) liberation/development theory derived from the Latin American experiences. Kumar has been in the forefront in justifying the need for an alternative perspective to address the issue of development. But his position takes him to a political project by which media education is equated with media activism. However, its focus on development is inadequate to grasp the contemporary scenario in India. On the contrary, Sen (1995) provides fresh thinking and redefines the term «development» from the perspective of developing countries. Sen outlines a framework to analyse a variety of social issues, such as well-being and poverty, liberty and freedom, gender bias and inequalities, justice and social ethics (Sen, 1993: 30). It points to the information necessary to make a judgement, and consequently rejects alternative approaches which it considers normatively inadequate. Thus, the capability approach involves «concentration on freedoms to achieve in general and the capabilities to function in particular» (Sen, 1995: 266). The major constituents of the capability approach are functionings and capabilities. Functionings are the «beings and doings» of a person, whereas a person's capability is «the various combinations of functionings that a person can achieve. Capability is thus a set of vectors of functionings, reflecting the person's freedom to lead one type of life or another» (Sen, 1992: 40). A person's functionings and his/her capability are closely related but distinct. «A functioning is an achievement, whereas a capability is the ability to achieve. Functionings are, in a sense, more directly related to living conditions, since they are different aspects of living conditions. Capabilities, in contrast, are notions of freedom, in the positive sense: what real opportunities you have regarding the life you may lead» (Sen, 1987: 36).

One of the major strengths of the capability approach is that it can account for interpersonal variations in the conversion of the characteristics of commodities into functionings. These interpersonal variations in conversion can be due to either individual or social factors. This is not a side-effect or by-product of the capability approach, but is of central importance to Sen: «Human diversity is no secondary complication (to be ignored, or to be introduced 'later on'); it is a fundamental aspect of our interest

in equality» (Sen, 1992: 11). Indeed, if human beings would not be diverse, then inequality in one space, say income, would more or less be identical with inequality in another space, like functionings or capabilities (Sen, 1991). Sen's insistence on the importance of human diversity is thus crucial for his defence of functionings and capabilities as the relevant space for well-being evaluation.

The capability approach accounts for diversity in two ways: by its focus on functionings and capabilities as the evaluative space, and by the explicit role it assigns to individual and social conversion factors of commodities into functionings. Sen makes a distinction between basic capabilities and fundamental capabilities. Basic capabilities are a subset of all capabilities; they refer to the freedom to do some basic things. The relevance of basic capabilities is «not so much in ranking living standards, but in deciding on a cut-off point for the purpose of assessing poverty and deprivation» (Sen 1987: 109). Hence, while the notion of capabilities refers to the freedom of all kinds of functionings, ranging from very necessary and urgent ones to highly complicated ones, basic capabilities refers to the freedom to do some basic things. As Sen (1993: 41) writes, «the term 'basic capability', used in Sen (1980), was intended to separate out the ability to satisfy certain crucially important functionings up to certain minimally adequate levels». Basic capabilities will thus be crucial for poverty analysis and more in general for studying the well-being of the majority of people in developing countries, while in rich countries well-being analysis would rather also include capabilities which are less necessary for physical survival.

As the capability approach could best be seen as a framework of thought, the relevance of either basic capabilities or all capabilities depends on the issue at hand. But it is important to acknowledge that the capability approach is not restricted to poverty and deprivation analysis, or development studies, it can also serve as a framework to understand media education in the developing world and the developed world by differentiating their capabilities and functionings.

## 3. Situating Media Education as Another Form of Pedagogy

Teaching methodology within media education has varied with the objectives and also with the pedagogical practices in education. For instance, in the early years of media education the paternalistic objectives took the form of a disguised narrative whereby the teachers specifically sought to improve the media tastes of students. In recent years, changes in media have seen different teaching styles involving different media like radio, TV and others. They increasingly transform the methodology of media education from hierarchical «discussions» (from teacher to student) to a reflective, «dialogue» form, involving teacher and student. At present, media education has developed a distinct epistemology (Masterman, 2001: 44-45). Masterman also argues that «teaching effectively about the media demands non hierarchical teaching modes» (1985: 27).

Renee Hobbs writes that the implications of identifying «literacy as the ability to access, analyze, evaluate and communicate messages in a variety of forms» means that a process of learning and an expansion of the concept of «text» to include all sorts

of messages is included in this definition. This view considers students as actively engaged in the process of analyzing and creating messages. It implies some basic principles of school reform including: «an enquiry-based education; students-centred learning; problem-solving in cooperative terms; alternatives to standardized testing; and an integrated curriculum» (Hobbs, 2001: 166). Hobbs states that literacy defined as such would restore the important connection between school and culture, making education more relevant to the communities in which students belong. Besides, it reflects the kind of authentic learning which occurs when reading and writing take place in contexts where «process, product and content are interrelated» (Edelsky, Al-twerger and Flores, 1991: 9 cited in Hobbs, 2001). In this view, language skills and learning are conceived of as being inherently social processes, requiring direct enga-gement and experience tied to meaningful activity (Hobbs, 2001: 172).

Again, the pedagogical approach differs in the developing countries as the informational needs and the cultural experiences are different from those of the developed West. Criticos writes that the issues addressed by Hobbs have implications for nuances in different social environments whether it is a highly industrialized society, a media saturated society, a rural agrarian society or even a democratic society (Criticos, 1991: 229-239). Connecting epistemological and emancipatory interests thus allow social experiences to inform school knowledge and encourages the development of children as critical citizens, which is necessary for a democratic society.

In the case of some developing countries, the increasing focus on media education comes from its being seen as an effective means to remove social inequalities generated by unequal access to the means of information. In the Philippines, for instance, some religiously-based organizations teach literacy to the under privileged sections of society. Other countries like South Africa work in the framework of programs set up to aid the third World countries through developing media education (Pinsloo & Criticos, 1991). A strong element in media education there is that its educational initiatives have strongly been influenced by political struggles against apartheid (in the media themselves). Media education initiatives have been used towards national reconstruction and the development of a critical citizenry. Criticos writes that media education in South Africa draws on critical pedagogy or «people's education» based on a creative and generative education as opposed to the dominant, consumptive and domesticating education. Borrowing from Paolo Freire's term of people «naming their world», this education sought to enable people to move towards «critical consciousness» through a process where oppositional media and new cultural forms are utilized to give a direct challenge to mainstream media and cultural repression (Criticos, 1991: 229-239).

Research results on the effectiveness of media education (like the efficacy of other traditional and innovative educational approaches) are practically non existent even in certain developed countries like the UK (Bazalgette, 2001). Still some literature does envision the scope of the field as well as identify some areas of enquiry. Media education is one of the best ways to facilitate critical thinking and student-centred education and as such aligns itself with other subjects that aim at developing abilities

of critical thinking like health education, education about democracy (Considine, 2001). Some scholars like Masterman feel that media education, when taught in an already established curriculum of subjects or as an integrated part of subjects as a whole, would be the most effective way of ensuring that every student learns about the media. The ensuing argument is that if media education is a part of an education for responsible citizenship to which every child has a right then its incorporation in an established part of education is the most effective way to achieve the goal. Linking media literacy to educational reform and authentic learning could assist to achieve multicultural educational goals by developing close links between the classroom, the home, and the community (Hobbs, 2001).

Quin and McMahon argue that the scope of media education has to go beyond text-based analyses to an examination of audiences and the broader technological environment. To this effect, they argue for a theoretical curriculum model encompassing the text, the audience and the context. One might ask why audience studies should have any relevance to basic education. The answer is that «it is critical and increasingly so as we develop multicultural approaches to education as students must come to learn, early on, that different people and different groups often understand and interpret the same texts and communication acts differently» (Kubey, 2001: 9).

Other groups that are concerned with the implementation of regulatory and self-regulatory measures address the scope and practice of media education in terms of «protection» that «provides children 'with the skills and understanding to interact critically with the media'», and also in terms of young people's engagement in «critical participation as cultural producers in their own right» (COMECE, 2001). However, Livingstone cautions against such moral panics. While children do constitute a distinctive category of media audiences, some issues like their use of media and access to ICTs are not always constructively mediated by the school. Neither are they at home, where social inequalities can prevail and where viewing is constrained by the availability of one's own language programmes, etc. Besides young people's increasing dependence on global media contents to form youth cultures must not be overlooked. Each of these issues must be understood in terms of their contexts and each allowed for alternative interpretations. Livingstone writes that children and young people represent an increasingly influential segment of the population, whether viewed in terms of family dynamics, citizen rights, or as a consumer market.

Children are not simply passing through a developmental phase on the way to adulthood. In fact, children are a distinct, heterogeneous cultural group. They are also a sizeable market segment. They interact with adults within households with ICT situated in the midst of these cross-generation negotiations. Livingstone writes that a technologically deterministic media centric approach (that attributes social change to technological innovation) or a cultural deterministic approach (that asserts a romantic view of childhood in which media are shaped by their contexts of use) are based on an implicit view of childhood and youth. Rather she proposes a culturalist and constructivist framework for the sociology of childhood that lays the stress on the child-as-agent. To recognize the interdependence facilitates theoretical and empirical

linkages between research on children and youth and also an understanding of the fact that children's lives are «thoroughly mediated» (Livingstone, 2001: 308-310).

Buckingham also asserts that the notion of the vulnerable child in need of protection from the dangers of the media, an assumption on which media education is frequently based, is steadily giving way to the notion of the child as a sovereign consumer. Children are being much more intensively targeted by commercial interests and yet contemporary media culture also appears to offer enormous diversity, interactivity and control. The media increasingly offer children an experience of autonomy and freedom and also a sense that they, and not adults, are in charge. Buckingham writes that the development of a heterogeneous children's media environment is also related to broader changes in their social status, in the increasing institutionalization of childhood itself and in issues of identity formation. He argues that these developments represent a fundamental challenge to the modernist project of media education. It is effectively premised on the cultivation of rational thinking, the possibility of well-regulated public communication, and the production of «critical consumers» which would enable children to function as autonomous, rational social agents. Buckingham adopts a more «postmodern» pedagogical approach in his evaluation of the «playful approach» to media education. He applies this reference to forms of knowledge and learning that move beyond the confines of traditional, rationalist, academic modes (Buckingham, 2003a: 309-328).

To summarize, a common understanding among media education scholars is the recognition of the prevalence of media culture and the need for an interrogation of the various issues of media representations that impinge upon people's understanding of the world. The underlying implicit suggestion is for the need to educate citizens to these media implications. In developing countries, it implies an education that takes into consideration the issue of multicultural differences and also that raises awareness about the existence of inequalities in terms of gender, ethnic, caste and class difference, etc. In recent years, there has been some studies in the developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America that have critically examined the role of mainstream media in perpetuating some of these inequalities; they also have analyzed how alternative media can challenge these issues in a culturally diverse, democratic society. Some of the writings also address how media education has effectively contributed in bringing about various changes in these societies. Though some of the experiments were confined outside the school system, in Asia, the Philippines was the first country to integrate media education into the formal school curriculum (Kumar, 1999: 245).

## 4. Exploring Media Education in India

When dealing with media education, the issue is not about how to apply media but on how to apply critical learning about the media to issues of democracy, civic participation, etc. It is particularly important in the case of democratic countries like India where vast inequalities exist alongside opportunities. In a fast changing media environment as the one in India, to fulfil societal goals, the population needs an understanding of the nature of information and media technologies that produce them.

Since the liberalization of the economy in the 1990s, there has not only been an increasing trend towards deregulation and privatization of telecommunications, commercialization of communication services, and the entry of global media in India but also a wide reaching change in the media scenario itself. Despite the growth of media technologies, the globalization of media markets and the development of ICT technologies in India, one still finds that a significant sector of the population cannot avail itself of any of these opportunities and hence faces exclusion. Yet, there are significant changes in the rural areas too. For instance, by 2000, nearly half of all Indian villages were connected by telephone, a huge difference compared to the 4 percent in 1988 (Singhal & Rogers, 2001).

However, Indian society seems to be caught in a paradox, as the mostly urban media are churning out popular representations of the rural or the traditional world (according to their choice and perspective). They are also caught in socio-economic inequalities in society and reproduce them. Poor adherence to democratic practices, along with widespread inequality, is coupled with the many problems that the minority and marginalized communities face. The cultural and religious issues in India also require citizens to interrogate responsibly some of the many «realities» that are marketed as media products. The media are in the midst of different actors –the state, organizations in civil society, representatives of global capital, domestic capital, economic institutions and so on–, which creates immense possibilities and risks. This environment provides an opportunity to make thoughtful, critical uses of the wide array of information available, so as to meet individual as well as community needs.

Yet, despite such needs, media education in India remains an almost unexplored field of research with a few exceptional workshops by NGOs and religious groups like WACC (World Association for Christian Communication) or UNDA-OCIC, two international Catholic Organizations for electronic and cinematic media (Kumar, 1999: 244). Some communication education research looks at media and communication education needs in terms of the effectiveness of media training, that is the skill efficiency required to meet market expectations (Sanjay, 2002).

However, media education is more than a mere focus on media skill efficiency. A survey of media training institutions revealed that almost 80% of them stressed that media education must focus on the goals of advancing society. Explaining the nature of the media industry and organization was seen as an equally important goal, rather than just meeting manpower needs (Sanjay, 2002: 38). This takes on all the more significance as India has a large amount of young people. So media education must not only be embedded in the needs of children in society but also in the local community, with the larger goal of benefiting the country as a whole. However, media education, in India, is only undertaken by individual persons, a few NGOs as well as some religious bodies who deal with certain specific issues, especially the moral implications of some kind of media.

Childhood in India has not received as serious scholarly attention as womanhood. Although a few scholars (Sarkar, 2001; Nandy, 1992: 61) have highlighted the perspective of «modern conjugal couple» as the core of the modern family, such studies

are European-centred and an attempt to extend and universalise Aries's (1962) construction of modern childhood, as rightly pointed out by Gupta (2002). Viruru (2001) makes an attempt to capture the history of childhood through the schooling system. But his analysis paints a gloomy picture whereby childhood is a victim of modern education system undergoing the process of self-alienation imposed by colonialism and perpetuated through the post-colonial education system. As Oberoi (2006) summarises, Indian modes of child socialisation produce individuals who are inappropriately socialised for their role as agents of the developmental agenda of the modern nation state.

But the patterns of Indian child socialisation are bound to change as processes of modernisation and lately globalisation, proceed apace. As Murphy (1953) points out, Indian children are friendly, responsible, artistic, cheerful and spontaneous –a result she believes of the acceptance of children in the everyday pattern of family living, the easy participation of people of any age in the activities of the rest. But she adds that Indian children over the age of eight or nine –anticipating the fully socialised Indian personality–, lacked both the stimulus to problem solving or the practice in cooperative thinking and planning that would match the spontaneity and capacity for relationships. Murphy (1953), through her ethnography, suggests that expansion of schooling, any particular type of schooling, might lead to qualitative transformation at the cost of losses in the development process.

Several scholars (Narain, 1957; Nandy, 1980; Carstairs, 1957; Kakar, 1981; Seymour, 1999), following Murphy's work, have explored child-rearing practices in India and comment on over-indulgence childhood, maternal enthralment and a very different cultural model of upbringing in comparison with the West. Although there are very few studies on childhood per se, hardly any scholarly study exists on children's participation in media, except research done in a roundabout way, for instance, on the impact of media violence on children, on viewing habits and their effects on studies, and so on. Most of these constructions are adult-centric; children's views are rarely expressed and respected. How children use media and participate in media are rare prerogatives within academia, except for a few child rights groups that raise the issue and bring it to the limelight. But such voices do not cause much stir because of the vulnerability and dependence of the child on the adults in India.

There have been many examples elsewhere in the world that demonstrate how children's participation in media brings about greater social justice and civic engagement. In fact, many of the goals of media education are realised through children's participation in the media: a «real» media participation in the community strengthens the children's ability and curiosity, gives them a critical understanding of the media, increases their knowledge of the local community and inspires social action (Feilitzen, 1999: 27). Media education is also about a struggle for information, a striving for social justice and critical citizenship. In a democratic society, decisions are made on the conceptions and impressions people receive through the varied media around them. So media education is about a retribution of political and social power, an opening up for creative and critical dialogue, participation and action. When included

in a process of learning and practice, it gives all groups and individuals in society the right to self expression, to development and liberation, independent of age, gender, socio-economic conditions, culture, religion and language (Feilitzen, 1999: 25).

In India, there is a clear distinction between the terms «media education», «educational technology» and «professional education in media». The term «educational technology» includes all teaching techniques as wells as the use of media in school lessons; the term «professional education in media» refers to a mixture between schools of journalism and film. «Media education» considers learning about media while educational technology is learning by using media. Educational technology is integrated into the curriculum of the Indian teacher training institutes to enable teachers to make use of media in their lessons whereas media education is not part of training.

There are only a couple of educational institutions including universities that look into media education, and offer projects and conferences. According to Kumar, media education should lead to democratic communication. He defines media education as a teaching method that uses formal, non-formal, and informal approaches to impart a critical understanding of various media in order to lead to greater responsibility, greater participation in the production of media as well as to a greater interest in the sales and reception of media. Kumar identifies some of the difficulties that media education faces in India: the exam-oriented curriculum, the dependence of media education on government policy, and a problem within the subject of media education itself: focusing on it as a subject would lead to overvaluing the media and separating them from their social context (and so a cross-curricular approach would be best suited, but more difficult to implement).

As Thomas writes, media education in India is still in an experimental stage with very little feedback. Besides the concepts of media education are rather geared to the Western hemisphere and India being a developing country has very different concerns about development. These kinds of changes in the Asian context demand an alternative definition and approach to media education to the one outlined by Masterman (1985). This new and different paradigm can be examined in the context of research and theories of the «popular» developed in Latin American countries as well as in relation to new social movements, around the struggle for the right to information and to communication.

The definition from the Toulouse Conference in 1991 reads that, «Media education is an educational process/practice that seeks to enable members of a community creatively and critically to participate (at all levels of production, distribution and exhibition) in the use of the technological and traditional media for the development and liberation of themselves and the community, as well as for the democratization of communication». This approach places the «development» and «liberation» of the community as a whole rather than on the production of critically autonomous individuals and the «democratization of communication» which entails participation by all members of a community at levels of planning, production, distribution and exhibition too. An alternative approach to media education, especially for developing countries, needs to lay the emphasis on principles of social justice, pluralism in culture,

language and religion and on the fundamental right to communicate (Kumar, 1999: 247).

## 5. In Lieu of a Conclusion

Media education as an area of studies can address and enlighten many issues and concerns. The purpose of this analysis was to consider some of the features that mark media education in general and also to attempt to locate them within the Indian context, in relation to other development perspectives. Despite disparities in theories and scientific approaches, an overall evaluation of media education concepts point out a common agreement over the understanding that communication is a cultural endeavour and that it has a basic underlying purpose which is constructed by the political, economic and social situations in different societies.

The media strongly influence people's conceptions and perceptions of the social environment. While providing entertainment, they also impart information, cultural knowledge and values that in turn influence how people come to view themselves, certain social groups, gender roles, etc. Thus, the media not only aid in socialization, but by providing symbolic resources, they also exercise a form of pedagogy. This is the basis of media education as researchers in this field argue that a media literate person can not only take on a critical, analytical and evaluative perspective but can also use media to contribute to the production and communication of knowledge. The important question is how does one further develop the pedagogy of media education in India? How can one harness the wide possibilities of media education for a larger democratic goal of strengthening governance, democratizing communication, civic participation and especially participation of all individuals equally in all matters that concern them? The challenge of this field is not only in exploring further intellectual possibilities in this area of studies but also in devising some empirical ways of engaging with media education.

Thus, studies ought to engage with not only assessing evolving policy frameworks, but the institutional fulcrums of such frameworks and the capacity of these institutions to involve stakeholders –often with conflicting interests– to create workable environments. This also necessitates examining the inter-relationship between changes in media technology, national governance processes and in organisations playing a role in policy advocacy. These dimensions constitute a novel way of engagement with the field of media education in India and worldwide.

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# 5. Nurturing Freedom of Expression through Teaching Global Media Literacy

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ABSTRACT

Freedom of expression is both a life and death matter and a bread and butter issue. Free media that allow a diversity of voices to be heard and all ideas to be discussed play a central role in the sustaining and monitoring of good government, as well as in the fostering of economic development and the encouraging of corporate transparency and accountability. Students in both developed and developing nations need to understand that there is no global issue or political arena in which the statement of problems and the framing of possible solutions are not influenced by media coverage. The Salzburg Academy on Media and Global Change convened for the first time universities from around the world, media organizations and International Institutions such as the Alliance of Civilizations and UNESCO to work jointly in the building of a global media literacy (GML) curriculum, related lesson plans, exercises and resources to teach students to evaluate the media they read, hear and see, as well as teach them to speak out for themselves. The GML materials are written by a global community for a global community and aim to prepare students the world over for active and inclusive roles in information societies.

KEY WORDS

Media literacy, freedom of expression, transparency, accountability, civil society.

A few years ago, the Nobel committee commissioned a report on the link between peace and news coverage. «Good news coverage, as opposed to propaganda or inaccurate reports, can be essential to peace», Professor Geir Lundestad, the secretary of the committee, said. «Today there are constant rumours and exaggerations and these fuel conflicts. If someone has accurate information, then it can often reduce conflicts»[1].

Media have never been more vital for the nurturing of civil society but freedom of expression is now in retreat. So much attention has gone into managing the new technologies, considering the viability of existing business models, coping with the dramatic demographic shifts in audiences and condemning the seemingly insatiable demand for scandal-mongering, that there has been little public space for expressing other concerns.

But press freedom organizations have recorded the global losses -the violations of free speech, the targeting of journalists, the repression of both bricks-and-mortar as well as virtual media outlets. Finally, the depredations on free expression and a free press have become impossible to ignore. By the end of the summer of 2008, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists, 31 journalists world-wide had died because of their work as journalists, and another 15 had died in suspicious circumstances. In 2007, according to the Paris-based World Association of Newspapers, 95 media employees were killed –44 in Iraq alone, 8 in Somalia, 6 in Sri Lanka and 5 in Pakistan. Other 110 media workers died in 2006 -among them such leading voices as Russian investigative reporter Anna Politkovskaya. Then there have been the cases of both individual and system-wide repression of journalists. In November 2007, when Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf suspended the country's constitution, for example, he also shut down TV stations, stopped foreign cable newscasts and imposed controls over the content of news reports. Punishments against journalists ranged from heavy fines and suspension of broadcast licenses to sentences of up to three years in prison.

It shouldn't take threats and assassinations and blanket censorship to put freedom of expression centre stage. Press freedom is not just essential in times of political crisis. Free media that allow a diversity of voices to be heard and all ideas to be discussed play a central role in the sustaining and monitoring of good government, as well as in the fostering of economic development and the encouraging of corporate transparency and accountability. Freedom of expression is both a life and death matter and a bread and butter issue. Freedom of expression is fundamental to the public's ability to live a safe life as well as to live a good one.

How can that case be made to a global public, often ignorant of its rights and uncertain of the links between rights and good governance?

One key way is through education, starting with K-12 schools and continuing through colleges and universities. Courses, case studies and assignments can give students not just the tools to criticize media for their tabloid news habits or their pandering to an attractive –but not heterogeneous– demographic, but can demonstrate to students that without a diversity of voices able to express their ideas, without a

media that can represent all opinions, there can be no free, open and fair society. Without the ability to hear all voices, without the protection for all voices, only the powerful voices will be heard. Without the ability to hear other voices, without the protection for those other voices, one's own voice is in danger of being silenced.

Teaching all students to evaluate what they read, hear and see and teaching them to notice what isn't being said and isn't being shown is crucial to their eventual exercise of their own rights as citizens and their own access to economic, political and social opportunities. Teaching all students to speak out for themselves –to the media, through the media, and even by creating their own media– is essential to moving them beyond a passive consumption of media and instilling in them the habit of active civic engagement.

## 1. Teaching Rights: Teaching Global Media Literacy

The right to freedom of expression and freedom of information is recognized as a human right under Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and recognized in international human rights law in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). The ICCPR recognizes the right to freedom of speech as «the right to hold opinions without interference. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression».

The United States locates its right to free speech and a free press in the First Amendment, part of the Bill of Rights to the US Constitution: «Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances».

In 2004, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation in the United States commissioned the Department of Public Policy at the University of Connecticut to «assess whether a relationship exists between the presence and nature of media programmes in high schools and levels of appreciation and knowledge of First Amendment rights». More than 100,000 students were surveyed across the United States, as well as nearly 8,000 teachers and more than 500 administrators at 544 public and private high schools.

The Knight-funded «Future of the First Amendment» study remains the most comprehensive American survey ever conducted on attitudes about free speech and freedom of the press in secondary schools. The findings were provocative. Here are the two top findings:

• «High school students tend to express little appreciation for the First Amendment. Nearly three-fourths (73 percent) either say they don't know how they feel about the First Amendment, or they take it for granted. After the text of the First Amendment was read to students, more than a third of them (35 percent) thought that the First Amendment goes too far in the rights it guarantees. Nearly a quarter (21 percent) did not know enough about the First Amendment to even give an opinion.

Of those who did express an opinion, an even higher percentage (44 percent) agreed that the First Amendment goes too far in the rights it guarantees».

• «Students are less likely than adults to think that people should be allowed to express unpopular opinions or newspapers should be allowed to publish freely without government approval of stories… Students who have taken more media and / or First Amendment classes are more likely to think that people should be allowed to express unpopular opinions… In general, the more students participated in media-related activities [such as working on a school newspaper], the more they appreciated certain First Amendment rights».

Consider the implications of those final sentences: students who take courses on media, who learn about the human rights to free speech and free press, and who actively participate in student media organizations are more likely than their peers to believe that people who hold unpopular opinions have a right to express them –and that others have a right to hear them. This then suggests a relationship among students pro-actively learning about the media, students working on their own media outlet, and students' respect and support for the rights of free expression and freedom of information for themselves and others.

If one posits a powerful connection among learning, doing and understanding, then the argument for teaching media literacy is a compelling one. And equally, there is a compelling case to be made that the teaching of media literacy should be global – the content of the course should be global, because the effects of media messages certainly are.

There is no global issue or political arena in which the statement of problems and the framing of possible solutions are not influenced by media coverage. Students in both developed and developing nations need to understand the different ways media shape the world and the essential ways in which media can foster civil society and ensure transparency and accountability, through offering access to information, for example, or underwriting investigative reporting of critical sectors of society. Students also need to understand the various ways media can subvert civil society, transparency and accountability, through such venues as hate radio and viral slurs transmitted via text messages, for example, or simply through powerful media elites stenographically reporting the messages of the government (as occurred in many media outlets in the United States during the lead-up to the Iraq War in 2003, for instance).

How to teach students those lessons? One way is to create global and comparative materials –courses, case studies and assignments– that give both insight into media's framing of and influence on issues and events and that also educate and empower students about how they themselves can use media to effect positive change.

These are formidable tasks, especially if considered on the global level, but a number of international organizations and universities have seen common cause in this agenda and come together to tackle the challenge through a new initiative dedicated to creating a global curriculum and student toolkit on media literacy.

The Salzburg Academy on Media and Global Change is that new initiative – launched by the International Centre for Media and the Public Agenda (ICMPA) at the University of Maryland and the Salzburg Global Seminar, an independent, non-governmental organization based in Austria that for 60 years has convened international leaders from different cultures and institutions to solve issues of global concern. ICMPA and Salzburg identified the need for a Media Literacy initiative, and then considered how to get other institutions engaged.

While media literacy has been gaining strength as an academic discipline in Europe, Asia and the Americas for the past decade or more, and governments and schools worldwide are mandating media literacy courses, the Academy is the first time that universities around the world have jointly worked to build a media literacy curriculum for global use.

Since the Summer of 2007, the three-week Academy programme has brought together top undergraduate, MA and PhD students with a global faculty to study and live at the Seminar's home in Salzburg, Austria, in the 18th century Schloss Leopold-skron. Funded by the partnering universities, by international organizations, national foundations, governments, corporations, and private philanthropists, professors and students have together worked in cross-national teams to research and write case studies and related exercises about how media affect the public's understanding of their own societies, governments, and regions. The Academy's media literacy resources are written by a global community for a global community and are accessible by students and schools from the developed as well as the developing world. The contributors to this effort come from the United Kingdom and Uganda, as well as China, Chile, College Park (Maryland) and beyond.

Of special interest to both the private and the public funders and the partnering universities from all continents –Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Europe, and Latin and North America– is the creation of curricula that can teach students how media can help bridge cultural and political divides and robustly foster freedom of expression from all sectors of society: young people and adults, men and women, majority and minority groups, corporate, governmental and public sectors.

The university environment is increasingly where innovation in education curricula is beginning. But it's not easy to change universities. While the bureaucratic infrastructure may be less entrenched than in primary and secondary school systems, a critical mass of people calling for change is still essential. So in order to encourage that critical mass developing, ICMPA and Salzburg decided to recruit not just individual students to come to the Academy or individual faculty members to teach at the Academy, but to invite both students and faculty members from specific universities from across the world to join in partnership. The idea was this: each university would commit to sending to the Salzburg Academy one faculty member (or administrator, such as a dean) as well as three to five students. That faculty member and those students would interact with other international students and teachers during the session in Salzburg, but then would return with the shared experience and sufficient personnel resources to be able to institute the lessons from Salzburg back at the home

institution. We've found that it takes a committed, dynamic and often well-placed faculty member or administrator to actually create a new course, a new programme or a new initiative that crosses university silos – from one discipline to another or even one degree level to another (undergraduate to graduate curriculum, say).

ICMPA and Salzburg have therefore made that agenda one of the pre-conditions for universities signing on as partners in the Academy: universities need to commit to using the jointly created curriculum and lesson plans in their courses back «home». And that has indeed happened -some universities have created new courses and programmes to teach «Global Media Literacy» and some are using the materials in pre-existing communication, journalism, public policy and general education courses.

When the faculty and the students from the Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico City who attended the first Salzburg Academy in 2007 returned back to their university, for example, they presented the work that had been created by the global teams in Salzburg to the entire faculty. As a result of that presentation, the faculty decided to authorize the creation of a graduate course in Global Media Literacy to be housed in the department of communication. That course found such an audience that a second course, for first-year students, was inaugurated. That course, too, was a success, and then the students who had attended the Salzburg Academy were asked to create a third iteration of the Salzburg curriculum this time for a college-prep programme for talented high school students.

The dean and the students who attended the Academy from Tsinghua University in Beijing had to travel a different route to launch a new course back at their home institution. In order to teach a course at Tsinghua University, there must be first a textbook on the subject. So upon returning to Beijing in the fall of 2007, Xiguang Li, the dean of the school of journalism, requested funding from the university president to create a Chinese-language textbook based on the Salzburg-generated curriculum. With the funds the dean received, he hired another faculty member and the students who attended the Academy to write the textbook. That text has been written, and it is not only being used to teach Global Media Literacy to students across Tsinghua's academic departments, but it is being used as a core resource to train teachers from throughout China in Tsinghua's Summer teacher-training programme.

Following the success of the first year of the Academy, others have seen the opportunities that a Global Media Literacy curriculum offers. As a result, the institutional partners in the Academy have expanded beyond academe. UNESCO and the UN Alliance of Civilizations (UNAoC) both reached out to join with ICMPA and the Salzburg Global Seminar to create a «Community of Knowledge about Media», as Jordi Torrent, project manager for the UNAoC Media Literacy Education Initiative, has said.

The attraction of the Salzburg Academy's Global Media Literacy (GML) curriculum for UNESCO and the UNAoC and partnering media organizations, such as LinkTV, is that the curriculum and related lesson plans, exercises and resources aim to prepare students the world over for active and inclusive roles in information societies. In the case of LinkTV, partnering with the Academy met a need that the

news outlet had already identified: LinkTV worked with faculty and students to create a new media literacy tool called «Know the News» that was launched in beta especially for the Salzburg Academy[2]. The remixing tool, now public, allows users to compare news coverage from around the world, test their knowledge of how news is shaped, and shape some news packages themselves.

In the case of UNESCO, the Academy could also meet a need that the organization had already sought to attend to: «No society can be free, open and fair without a diversity of voices», UNESCO has written. How to secure free, open and fair societies? In part through the schools. «This educational material», UNESCO wrote about the curricular material and student «toolkit» on the Academy site «is intended to deepen the understanding of freedom of expression and press freedom among young people»[3].

UNESCO contributed significantly to the shape and content of the project. Following UNESCO's launch of its «Model Curricula for Journalism Education for Developing Countries & Emerging Democracies» that it, together with Asian Media Information Centre (AMIC) and the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) introduced in Singapore in June 2007, UNESCO saw two still unmet needs:

• A need to teach students other than those in journalism programmes and courses about the role of the media in disseminating and framing political and social issues –i.e. teach those students Media Literacy.

• A need to teach all students –including those in journalism courses– of the central place of free expression and a free press within and among nations –i.e. teach students about Freedom of Expression.

As George Papagiannis, programme officer at UNESCO's Division of Freedom of Expression, Democracy and Peace, noted at the close of the second session of the Salzburg Academy: «The tools that UNESCO and the Academy have created enable students around the world to make a difference in their communities. From these lesson plans and toolkits, students learn that free expression and a free press are vital to the survival and health of open societies».

The Salzburg Academy's Global Media Literacy curriculum is divided into two parts. Each part offers a series of education «lesson plans».

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**Part One - Critical Thinking & Critical Skills**

The first half of the curriculum teaches students to value access to information and works to develop their critical capacities in comprehension, analysis and evaluation. Part One has three modules that teach students:

1) How to identify what «news» matters. This module teaches students such key concerns as how language influences audiences' reception of information, how images influence news messages and how core journalistic ethics and standards are essential for accuracy and credibility.

2) How to monitor media coverage. This module teaches students such lessons as how to

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monitor media's coverage of gender and race and how news coverage affects social and corporate institutions such as churches, schools and local businesses.

3) How to understand media's role in shaping global issues. This module teaches students how media report on critical issues such as terrorism. What are the under-reported terrorism stories, locally, regionally, globally? Or how do media cover Climate Change –as a scientific story, an economic challenge or a political problem?

**Part Two - Freedom of Expression**

The second half of the curriculum highlights the connections between media literacy and civil society –including the role media play in supporting good governance, economic development and informed citizenship. This half of the curriculum focuses on the essential role freedom of expression plays in allowing all voices to be heard, and teaches students the vital importance of media in sustaining and supporting that freedom. Part Two has three modules that teach students:

4) How to defend the importance of freedom of expression. This module teaches students about such pivotal matters as the essential role of investigative reporting in sustaining civil society, the value of good sourcing in reporting, and how the rule of law is essential for the survival of individuals' freedom of expression.

5) How to promote news literacy by creating and supporting good media. This module teaches students such hand-on concerns as how citizen organizations can responsibly use media to educate others, and about how important it is for citizens to actively engage with –even contribute to– both traditional and alternative forms of media.

6) How to motivate media to better cover global issues and events. This module teaches students how to conduct research studies that compare media coverage of events or issues. Audiences for the studies can use the studies' conclusions to evaluate their own media outlets –and media outlets themselves can use the studies' conclusions to improve their own reporting.

This multi-part curriculum is housed on the Salzburg Academy website, which is fully searchable (www.salzburg.umd.edu). The framework of the Academy curriculum allows university faculty, secondary school teachers and interested administrators either to create an entirely new course in Global Media Literacy or to pick and choose lessons and tools to augment existing classes. Once there, individuals can find resources either by moving sequentially through the six module topics, or by conducting an advanced search –such as looking for lesson plans about graphic images or looking for classroom exercises that call for role-playing. Visitors to the site can choose to comment on the lesson plans after registering on the site. They can also upload their own classroom exercises or resources –and they can download the lesson plans already up as a print document, enabling schools without consistent Internet access to use the materials in classrooms as well. Those who have registered for the website come from the ranks of teachers, students, media development experts, policy makers, journalists and home-schooling parents, among others.

## 2. Why Does Media Literacy Matter?

Consider China –not, on its face, the most open media environment in the world. In the Summer of 2007, Xiguang Li, dean of the journalism school at Tsinghua

University, attended the first session of the Salzburg Academy. At the start of the programme, he expressed serious concern about the state of journalism education in China. No matter how good the training at his university, he said, his journalism students were not being hired by Chinese media –privately-owned media outlets didn't want to pay for reporters and editors when they could get unpaid interns to do the work. And besides which, he noted, most of those media were tabloid-type outlets in which solid news –not to mention accuracy and balance– were hardly valued. Gossip and celebrity coverage dominated the non-Party print and online outlets. What was he to do as a journalism professor? He despaired and believed that while the work at the Academy was going to be interesting, it was not likely to make a dent in what he believed were the problems of journalism in his society.

The three weeks of work at the Academy transformed his opinion about the job in front of him and his colleagues. He now knew, he said, what he had to do. His work was not just to teach journalism students how to report on the events and issues around them, but to instruct all the students in the university about the importance of a free and fair media. Without an audience educated to understand how essential access to information is to the exercise of citizenship, he noted, there will be no pressure for quality journalism. He returned to Tsinghua with energy for a new cause: the creation of a textbook that would help teach China of the need for courses in Global Media Literacy.

How can media become a positive force for global change? When citizens call on mainstream media to act in the public interest and when citizens themselves both support traditional media and contribute to new media experiments that together can empower the community.

For that to happen, the public needs to be educated to understand the forces shaping the way information is produced, distributed and consumed. There are important «new» and «old» forces to understand: Google and YouTube, and websites such as Ushahidi and Global Voices, for example, epitomize «new media» –their immense potential and surprising effects. Reporters such as the assassinated Anna Politkovskaya represent «old media» –their literal struggle for survival and also their indispensable value.

There is no doubt that technology is changing the way all of us get and understand information. The trend is toward actively «searching» for what one wants to watch, read or listen to rather than passively taking in whatever editors or producers select. And YouTube, Ushahidi and Global Voices are all about viewers uploading their own contributions –videos, SMS messages, MP3 files. Through such new techniques of tagging, crowdsourcing and mapping, information can be passed on and comprehended in different and significant ways.

The fascination with the transformational effect of all this makes it easy to forget that «old-fashioned» –and expensive– reporting is still essential: there is no one who could replace Anna Politkovskaya, a traditional «old media» messenger, or the two German journalists killed in Afghanistan the same day.

Some of the journalists who died this year and last year and the year before were caught in the crossfire of ferocious wars; others were hunted down to prevent their stories from being told. But journalists are not being routinely killed just in Iraq or by terrorists. Investigative reporters who expose corrupt politicians, organized crime or the astonishing power of illicit traffickers of people, drugs or weapons are regularly murdered. Other types of reporters and media outlets are also silenced –either by outright censorship or by intimidation that can take the form of physical threats or, more commonly, economic intimidation through the imposition of ruinous license fees or the withdrawal of sponsored advertising.

Like the slaying of Politkovskaya, these killings, these kinds of intimidation offer dramatic illustrations that information matters. Insurgents, criminals, terrorists, corrupt politicians, corporate raiders and many others understand well that it is the months or years of digging by professional reporters, many of them supported by traditional news organizations, that will expose misdeeds and malfeasance. Politkovskaya's investigations and the work of other professionals provide the unambiguous evidence and credible «content» –documents, sources, doggedly checked and rechecked details– the public desperately needs for a functioning, civilized, open and ultimately free society.

Of course, technology expands the ways in which media –and we ourselves– can provide information in the public service. Ask Londoners about the political power of cell-phone pictures of the Underground and bus bombings uploaded to the photo-sharing site Flickr, or ask residents of New Orleans about the power of blogs covering the failed relief efforts after Hurricane Katrina. It is harder to quash the millions of citizen-journalists armed with photos, videos and blogs than it is to silence a single, bothersome reporter such as Politkovskaya. YouTube, Google, Flickr and many other Web sites offer valuable tools for keeping the world informed. But they are not a substitute for Politkovskaya and her colleagues.

So what do we need? We need a robust, active independent media, supported by a rule of law. We need a robust, active new media sector that journalists and citizens alike can learn from, contribute to, build on, pressure to keep fair and balanced. We need classes, in every grade, at every level of sophistication, that teach the young that media matter. We need the information, the institutions, the insights and the inspiration. We need Global Media Literacy.

### Notes

[1] Gwladys Fouché, Journalists eligible for Nobel peace prize, The Guardian (www.guardian.co.uk/media/2006/oct/06/pressandpublishing.broadcasting) (2006-10-06).

[2] Available at www.linktv.org/knowthenews.

[3] See UNESCO's own story on its interest in media literacy and freedom of expression: Freedom of Expression Goes to School, UNESCO Courier, 2008, 4 (http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=26318&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html).

# 2

# MEDIA EDUCATION AND ITS ENABLING ENVIRONMENT: REFORMS BEYOND CAPACITY BUILDING

# 1. Education Reform as an Agent of Change: The Development of Media Literacy in Hong Kong during the Last Decade

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ABSTRACT

Although media education is a comparatively new area of studies in Hong Kong, it is already flourishing. Why is this case? This contribution identifies education reform as an important factor in encouraging the development of media education in the last decade, and the three major forces of change in this reform have been: the emphasis on civic education since Hong Kong's return to China sovereignty, the introduction of information technology (ICT), and the recent review of the curriculum. The analysis confirms that five basic skills are developed via media education: communication, creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving and self-management. This development is especially fostered if the teaching materials are chosen from a wide array of media and if transversal modules are taught around student-centred strategies.

## 1. Introduction

*Media education has been around for quite some time in the West (Bazalgette & al., 1990), but only started to gain acceptance in Asia (Cheung, 2005), particularly in Hong Kong, in the last decade. During this time it has progressed from being an area about which little was known to being a subject which an increasing number of schools are adopting as part of their curriculum or extra-curricular activities. In Hong Kong, however, media education has not been the only «subject» with demands for curricular space. Over the last ten years, the importance of sex education, environmental education, and civic education have all been emphasized, but they have still not been able to gain much ground in the school timetable, and are considered as marginalized curriculum. What happened then to spur the development of media education in Hong Kong? Education reform in the last decade has facilitated the growth of media education in Hong Kong.

## 2. Education Reform

The development of media education has been rapid in Hong Kong. Although Hong Kong is a media-rich city, media education was a term unheard of until the nineties, when the University of Hong Kong offered it as an elective course to participants of its Postgraduate in Certificate of Education programme in 1996. Since 2003, «Media Education in the New Hong Kong Curriculum» has been offered as an elective to students taking the Master of Education programme at the University of Hong Kong. Publication-wise, the first academic article written about media education in Hong Kong appeared in 2001 (Cheung, 2001). Since then, the growth of media education in Hong Kong has become visible and among the many factors accounting for its growth, the most significant has been the reform in education.

Society now is very different from what it used to be 10 years ago, and in order to keep pace with the changing world and to nurture students so as to meet the needs of tomorrow's society, education reform is inevitable. The new wave of education reform set new agendas in education: apart from the traditional emphases on ethics, intellect, physical fitness, social skills and aesthetics, schools in Hong Kong were expected to produce a new generation of students who could learn on their own, think for themselves, and explore new arenas of learning. These reforms have influenced, directly or indirectly, the development of media education in Hong Kong. Figure 1 depicts a chronology of change in educational reform and how media education fits in.

## 3. Promotion of Civic Education Since the Return of Sovereignty to China in 1997

In 1987, Lee (1987: 243) claimed that civic education had not been discussed in Hong Kong for some 30 years, and 10 years later, Fok (1997) asserted that civic education had never occupied an important place in the Hong Kong school curriculum. This is understandable as Hong Kong was still a British colony before 1997, and the

**1997**
Promotion of
Civic Education

**1998**
Developments in
IT

**1999**
Educational
Reform

**2005**
New Secondary
Curriculum

Situation: teaching
method ineffective;
student interest low

Solution: media edu-
cation teaches the nature
of one of the most im-
portant political forces—
the media; it also help
students become more
critical and participa-
ting—in short, a better
citizen

Situation: internet
becomes a formidable
influence on the lives of
youth

Solution: media
education equip students
with the critical literacy
skills necessary for
survival in the Internet
Age; it also engages
students in media pro-
duction. In short, media
literacy is the 'new
literacy' essential for the
Internet generation

Situation: the Blueprint
stresses student-centered,
self-learning

Solution: media
education provides just
that! The field has long
ago moved beyond
protectionism and has
now incorporated into its
very nature strong
emphases on enjoyment,
creativity, and student-
centeredness. Students
are encouraged to be
active learners rather
than passive receivers.

Situation: the new core
subjects contains
substantial media-related
materials

Solution: media educa-
tion combines very well
with the core subjects. In
particular, it helps stu-
dents make good sense of
the material they are
given in Liberal Studies,
fosters critical thinking
skills as required for the
Chinese and English
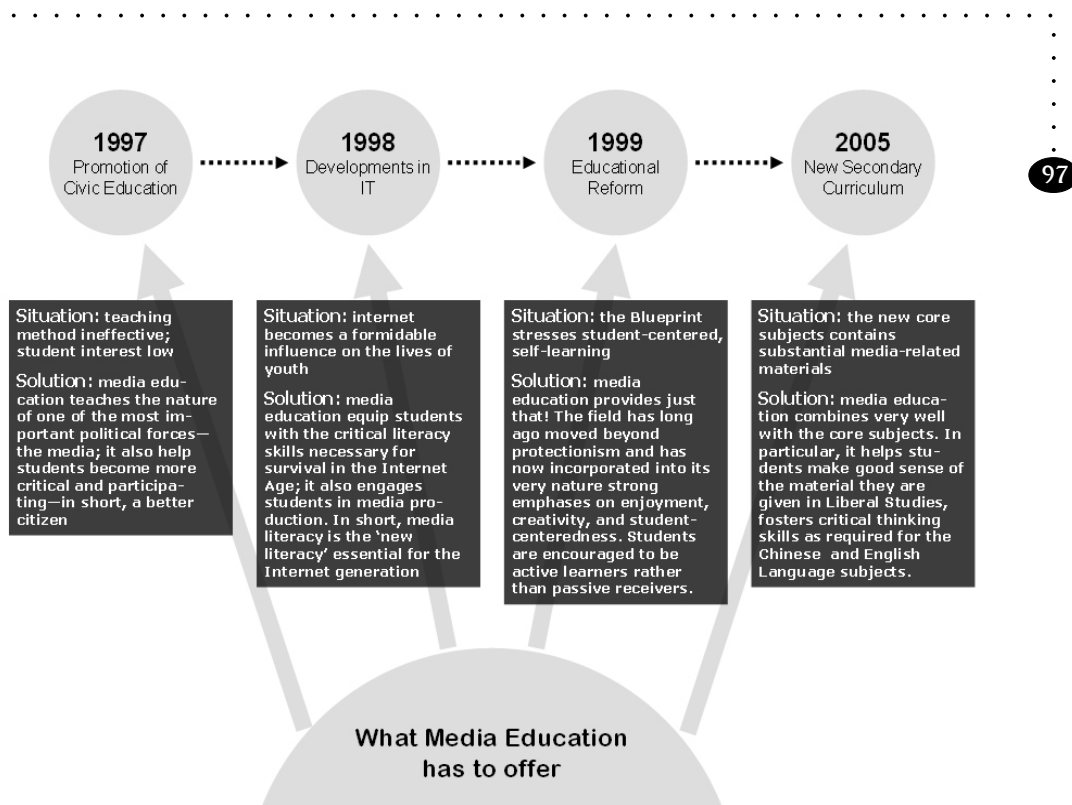Language subjects.

**What Media Education
has to offer**

FIGURE 1. A Chronology of Change in Educational Reform

cultivation of the love of one's own motherland would not be the priority then. However, after the signing of the Sino-British Declaration in 1984, and with the political reform towards representative government in 1984 and the 1997 issue, there was an upsurge of interest in, and concern for, civic education. In 1985, the Education Department issued the «Guidelines on Civic Education in Schools» (hereafter referred to as the «Guidelines 85», CDC, 1985), in which schools were encouraged to implement civic education through formal, informal and hidden curricula. Then, a decade later, another set of guidelines were produced, and the direction of the curriculum in the «Guidelines 96» is clearly stated in the foreword (CDC, 1996): «As Hong Kong prepares to be the Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China in 1997 and meets the challenges of the twenty-first century, the schools in Hong Kong have the mission to equip our young people with the attitudes, values, beliefs and competences which help them become contributing citizens to society, the country and the world».

The «Guidelines 96» set the tone for greater emphasis on civic education and more schools were prepared to accommodate civic education in their timetable as well as extra-curricular activities. Two years later, another set of guidelines «Civic Education –Curriculum Guidelines for Secondary Schools (Form 1 to Form 3)» (CDC, 1998)– were produced, which stated that students should be taught to make critical analyses of, and to judge the reliability of, the news and the suitability of ways of

reporting used by the mass media. With these sets of guidelines, the components related to media education were now present.

Although civic education is regarded as an important area to be taught, especially since Hong Kong's return of sovereignty to mainland China, teachers have expressed difficulties in teaching it (Cheung & Leung, 1998). In the West, research shows that traditional expository strategies are dominant but ineffective in the teaching of civic education (Dynesson, 1992; Sears, 1994), and unfortunately, this traditional way of teaching strategy is still a dominant method of teaching civic education across Asian countries (Han, 2000; Lee, 1999; Liu, 1999; Otsu, 2000). What is more, when it comes to discussing the structure of the government and various legal and social policies, students show little interest as they are not familiar with the contents taught and these issues bear no relevance to their daily lives. What students need is a kind of participative, active learning about civics and citizenship (Hahn, 1996; Patrick, 1999; Print & Smith, 2000). The logic is obvious. When students participate actively in the learning of civic education in schools, they will have the habit of participating actively as citizens when they become adults.

Cheung (2004) believes that this difficulty could be resolved by using media education to teach civic education. The relationship between media education and civic education is clear. Aufderheide & Firestone (1993: 1) argue that the purposes of media education are to develop «citizenship, aesthetic appreciation and expression, social advocacy, self-esteem, and consumer competence». Ahonen & Virta (1999: 248) assert: «Citizens actions and critical thinking in the information society are linked with communication skills and the capacity to influence others. Media education can therefore be considered as a key area in civics». In 1999, a study of civic education across twenty-four countries was conducted and the term «mass media» and «media education» appeared very frequently in nearly almost every case (Torney-Purta, Schwille & Amadeo, 1999). The connection between media education and civic education is thus acknowledged. Media education either appears as a topic discussed in the civics curriculum, as in Romania (Bunescu & al., 1999) and the Netherlands (Dekker, 1999); or in relation to other subjects that have strong links with civics, such as language, history and social studies, as in Belgium (Blondin & Schillings, 1999). In Finland, media education is regarded as a part of civics. Ahonen and Virta (1999: 248) states: «Through media education, the students have an opportunity to practice active and analytical information acquisition and also how to have influence through different media. In addition to media education oriented to social criticism, emphasis has been placed on students' skills in using the media. Media education no longer sees students as passive receivers but as communicators with an active role... Schools include elements of media education in the syllabi of mother tongue or history and social studies».

The IEA Civic Education Study indicated that the media play an important role in developing high school students' civic knowledge and engagement skills (Amadeo, Torney-Purta, & Barber, 2004). Research shows that students do watch the news, but not news which are presented in a traditional way. A study by Kwak et al. (2004)

showed that late night entertainment talk shows were an important source for young people's political engagement. Another study by the Annenberg Public Policy Center (2004) produced similar findings, noting that viewers of late-night comedy programmes, especially «The Daily Show» with Jon Stewart on the cable channel Comedy Central, were more likely to know the issue positions and backgrounds of presidential candidates than people who did not watch late-night comedy. Jon Stewart's book «America: A Citizen's Guide to Democracy Inaction», a fake text book about U.S. history, became a bestseller in 2005. Young people like the way news is presented by Jon Stewart and in order to attract a younger audience to the Oscar Awards show, with its declining ratings, Stewart was made the host of the show in 2006.

Other researchers (Bennett, 2004; Pew Research Center, 2004) have also noted the increasing role of the Internet and comedy programmes as a source of news for younger Americans as they continue to turn away from more traditional news sources. This echoes what Jon Katz, a media critic, wrote in Rolling Stone magazine, that young people prefer the «informal» and «ironic» style of reporting of some cable TV channels to the «monotonously reassuring voice» of mainstream news journalism (1993). There is evidence that the new media environment may play an integral role in fostering active and informed engagement among e-savvy youth, who are increasingly turning away from mainstream media in favour of Web, wireless, and other alternative information sources (The Kaiser Family Foundation, Key Facts: Media, Youth, and Civic Engagement, Fall 2004).

Media education can empower individuals to be more critical and participating (Hobbs, 1998; Messaris, 1998). Aufderheide & Firestone (1993: 26) argue that media education empowers a young person with «the ability to analyze, argument and influence active reading (i.e., viewing) of media in order to be a more effective citizen». Lewis & Hally (1998) noted the important relationship between media education, politics and society, and that the potential of media education to transform society lies in the fact that a media literate person would be motivated to take a more active role in participating in a changing society, making it more democratic. In the U.S., media education is seen as a strategy for participatory democratic citizenship (Tyner, 1998). The argument is: «If an informed electorate is the cornerstone of a democratic society, and if the polls that report that most North Americans get their news and information from electronic media are correct, then it is imperative that students must learn to read and write electronic media, as well as print, in order to  participate fully in a democratic society» (Tyner, 1998: 162).

In Hong Kong, the mass media has been identified as an important factor in civic education (Lee, 1999: 332-338). Media education is crucial in helping students to analyze media messages as «it is the mass media which have taken the initiative in providing information about politics and government from their own perspectives, resulting in a rather varied presentation of the news». In response, «the school practitioners in particular emphasized the need for media education». Cheung (2005: 41) traced the development of civic education in Hong Kong, examining the civic education guidelines in various years, and concluded that «Global change is shaping

the future direction of education in Hong Kong. In the past twenty years, the place of media education in civic education has gradually changed. From serving as factual examples it has developed into discussion, and from a very small part in the curriculum it has expanded to certain major parts of key learning areas, and has become increasingly important as a part of civic and moral education». His other research (2004) shows that civic education lessons are most appropriately taught in the context of media education.

The teaching of media education adopts an interactive approach where students have to analyze critically the messages conveyed by the media. Through media education, young people's awareness of economic, political as well as social issues will be increased, as images received from the mass media will motivate them to discuss and learn, leading them to inquire into, and understand, issues in society, in order to become better participative democratic citizens (Law, 1999; Buckingham, 2000; Kubey, 2004; Cheung, 2006).

## 4. The Introduction of Information Technology (IT)

With the rapid development of the Internet and World Wide Web since the 1990s, the world has become flat (Friedman, 2005). The introduction of IT has had a strong influence on education in Hong Kong as well. In 1997, in his Inaugural Policy Address, Mr. C.H. Tung, the Chief Executive of Hong Kong, pledged to make Hong Kong «a leader, not a follower, in the information world of tomorrow». To realize this vision, students, both primary and secondary, need to be equipped with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to meet the challenges of the information age. In 1998, a document entitled «Information Technology For Learning in a New Era: Five-Year Strategy 1998/99 to 2002/03» was released which provided a blueprint for the implementation of IT in education at school level.

However, every coin has two sides. While the introduction of IT helps transform learning and teaching, the growth of the internet also gives rise to many problems. A study of young people in 12 countries by Livingstone & Bovill (2001) showed that the media shape the meanings and practices of young people's everyday lives, although not very often in a good sense. An issue of «Newsweek» reported the results of a survey that had been conducted among young people throughout the world. It was found that they spent most of their leisure time with the media (Guterl, 2003). In Hong Kong, a study showed that television has now been joined by the attractions of the Internet, which is increasingly used by young people for communication, enjoyment, and obtaining information (Breakthrough, 2003). Students do not only need the training of IT skills, but also the critical literacy skills to help them survive in cyberspace. Media education is about the encoding and decoding of media messages, nurturing students to be more critical in the reception of messages, and to «read» in a critical manner (Frechette, 2002).

Besides equipping our students with the necessary skills for the future workplace, IT has a profound impact on teaching and learning. Students can now explore and

learn information by themselves in their own time and space. With the implementation of IT in education, there will be a «paradigm shift» from a largely textbook-based and teacher-centred approach to a more interactive and learner-centred approach. The teaching of media education fits in with this, as it requires an approach very different from the traditional «chalk and talk» method: students are encouraged to find out information through the encoding and decoding of media messages, and by engaging actively in media production to become critical viewers of the media. In media education, the main focus is on student-centred learning, which requires a media pedagogy that encourages investigation and critical and reflective thinking on the part of students. Children learn how materials and knowledge are selected and constructed for media texts, and they have to ask questions to help them clarify issues that have value implications. This echoes the description of an emerging paradigm by Pelgrum and Anderson (1999), where students become more active in setting their own learning paths and teachers become helpers in the students' process of learning.

Learning by doing is important. Students are encouraged to explore learning at a deep and meaningful level. With IT having been fully implemented in the last few years, students are now able to be engaged in media production, providing a platform for immersing themselves and learning through exploring and doing. Frechette (2002: 114) states that media production is vital to all pedagogy: «Just as it is necessary for pupils to learn to write as well as to read, it is invaluable for teachers to allow pupils to «produce» media texts as well as deconstruct them through their own voice, ideas, and perspective (realizing of course the partial subjectivity from which these voices emanate)». Buckingham et al. (1995: 28) envisaged the significance of IT in facilitating media production. They asserted: «More significantly perhaps, along with information technology, media education has become a prominent part of a much more far-reaching argument about the need for «new literacies» that will be appropriate to the changing social and cultural landscape of the next century. Crucially, this new literacy is defined not merely as a form of defensive 'critical' reading, but also as an ability to write or produce in the new communications media».

In the past, it was difficult for students to participate in media production as equipment was expensive and required a high level of skill to operate. This is no longer the case, as advances in communication technologies have made the cost of purchasing equipment more affordable and the skills needed to operate equipment more easily acquired. Today, even primary school pupils are able to produce a video on their own (Gauntlett, 1996).

The idea of media production is consistent with the aims of UNESCO's Declaration on Media Education (quoted in OCR. 2002): «The school and family share the responsibility of preparing the young person for living in a world of powerful images, words and sounds. Children and adults need to be literate in all three of these symbolic systems. [We need] to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes which will encourage the growth of critical awareness… and should include the analysis of media products, the use of media as means of creative expression, and effective use of and participation in available media channels».

Media educators believe that media production is a desirable form of media education (Buckingham & al., 1995; Eiermann, 1997). For example, Quin (2003) points out that media production has been a core element in Australian schools since the introduction of media studies into school curricula in the 1970s. In the UK, media production is included in the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance Examinations (AQA), and is also a module in the syllabus of media studies both in Oxford, Cambridge and the RSA Examinations (OCR). Its aims are stated as follows: «The purpose of production work is for candidates to put theory into practice, by demonstrating knowledge and understanding of technical skills in their own media production, as well as to engage them in creative, imaginative and aesthetic activity» (OCR, 2002: 1).

At present, media education in Hong Kong is practiced in a number of ways. Some schools have introduced media education lessons into the school curriculum, while others make use of campus radio or campus TV as a kind of media education. The latter is particularly popular with the social service sector, local media production groups, and individual practitioners. The reasons for this are simple. Media production gives students a sense of satisfaction when products are created. The traditional mode of learning, in which teachers delivered knowledge in a didactic manner, has changed, and students can now hold the digital camera, or sit in the control room to operate the panel, and feel that they have some control over what they want to learn. Furthermore, as the syllabus does not set limits to the scope of media education, students have the flexibility to explore, thereby discovering further learning opportunities.

## 5. Education Blueprint for the 21st Century: Review of the Academic System

In the document «Education Blueprint For the 21st Century: Review of the Academic System», published in 1999, words like «student-centred», «self-learning», and «motivation» were mentioned frequently. Moreover, the document questioned whether the media were «aware of their powerful influence on the formation of values and learning of language by young people», and asked whether the media should «disseminate information to the public, and help young people develop positive values, distinguish right from wrong and broaden their horizons?» (Education Commission, 1999: 28). That set the scene for media education, which aims to help students develop logical and creative thinking, through the critical analysis of the media messages that they are exposed to every day. The nature of media education is student-centred and students are more motivated to learn through discussing the contents they enjoy. Furthermore, they can engage in producing media products in the form of campus newspaper, radio, and TV at a later stage.

Another suggestion in the document was the introduction of key learning areas to replace the fixed subject boundaries. One of these key learning areas was Personal, Social and Humanities Education (PSHE). Media education, a relatively new concept, which had not previously been covered in the Education Department's official guidelines, was here described as an element in cross-curricular programmes, and a possible component of this key learning area in the consultative document. This was

an indication of a growing awareness of the importance of media education on the part of policy makers. Media education was finally on the official agenda.

## 6. The New Senior Secondary Curriculum

The Education Department in Hong Kong is now conducting a review of the academic structure of senior secondary education (EMB, 2004), and has proposed a restructuring in subjects available to students. Among them, liberal studies, Chinese, English, and mathematics are core subjects to be taken by students, and the first three have components closely related to media education.

• Liberal Studies. Liberal Studies is a subject which developed in the early nineties, and although not many schools have adopted it in their curricula, the situation will change as the «334 Report» (EMB, 2005: 1) stipulated that Liberal Studies will be a core subject with the following aims: Liberal Studies aims to broaden students' knowledge base and enhance their social awareness through the study of a wide range of issues. The modules selected for the curriculum focus on the themes of significance to students, society and the world; and they can help students to connect different fields of knowledge and broaden their horizons. The learning experience provided fosters students' capacity for life-long learning so that they can face the challenges of the future with confidence.

The component of media education is recognized as stated in the document (CDC, 2006a: 4): «As the coverage of Liberal Studies includes contemporary issues, the media become one of the important sources of information apart from teachers», together with handouts and other learning and teaching materials. Students will learn to evaluate critically information, phenomena, and ideas presented in the media, so that they can distinguish between facts, opinions and biases. It is expected that, with due care, teachers will often select media materials for use in discussion, and that students will base their conclusions on sound evidence and other relevant sources of information, and not on ignorance and biases».

Moreover, students are required to conduct an Independent Enquiry Study with media being one of the six suggested themes. In order to facilitate the teaching and learning of Liberal Studies, a series of teaching training courses are offered, some of which are conducted by the Hong Kong Association of Media Education, focusing on the use of media education to teach Liberal Studies.

• Chinese Language. The new Chinese Language syllabus contents are more contemporary, and relevant to students' daily experiences. Among the nine generic skills mentioned in the Guide (CDC, 2006b: 21), the critical thinking skills are especially related to mass media. Indeed, the Guide explicitly cites as examples of activities that foster critical thinking, «reading newspapers and magazines, listening to radios and watching televisions, comparing and contrasting how different media cover the same event, and evaluating information for authenticity». For these media-related activities to be effective, some forms of media education are essential, and such education may

take the form of introducing and elaborating on the central concepts of media education (e.g. constructed reality, meaning negotiation, and media bias), or it may take the form of student-centred analysis and production.

With some elective subjects mentioned in the Guide –in particular, Literature and Film Adaptations, Drama Workshop, News and Reporting, Multimedia and Applied Writing– the relevance of, and need for, media education is even clearer. For example, one of the central aspects of media education is the study of the creative techniques involved in different forms of communication. Students enrolled in either of the four subjects mentioned will benefit immensely from a knowledge of the grammar and syntax of the medium they are engaged in, a knowledge that answers questions like «What do big headlines signify?»; «What do camera close-ups convey?»; and «Why is this music genre used in this part of the film?».

• English Language. Media education is widely taught in Language Arts in many countries (Hart, Hammett & Barrell, 2002; Krueger & Christel, 2001) and research indicates that after receiving media education training, students perform better in reading, writing and listening skills (Hobbs & Frost, 1998).

The Guide recommends several types of activities for developing the generic skill of Creativity (CDC, 2006c: 52), many of which may be combined with some form of media education. For instance, it was suggested that students' creativity be strengthened through «reading and listening to a broad range of imaginative texts including poems, novels, short stories, plays, films, jokes, advertisements, songs, radio, and television programmes, and demonstrating sensitivity in their critical appreciation of these texts (ibid.)». Most of these «imaginative texts», however, are not print-based and thus have a different grammar which students may not find familiar. The «reading of» and «listening to» of these texts will be greatly facilitated if students are equipped with the skills required to appreciate and make sense of such non-traditional texts, and this is exactly what media education is designed to achieve.

Moreover, among the nine recommended compulsory modules for senior secondary level (Ibid.: 17), the module «Communicating» provides an excellent opportunity for carrying out media literacy-related teaching activities. Even the textbook itself –insofar as it involves the nature of the mass media, the Internet and communication technology– may use existing teaching materials of media education and incorporate such key concepts as media text, construction, and creative techniques. The same may also be said of the unit on show business, contained in the module on «Leisure and Entertainment».

## 7. In Summary

While media education is not a formal subject in the Hong Kong curriculum, there are arguments to support its inclusion in light of current educational reforms. In fact education reform has provided a platform for the development of media education in the last decade.

Since the return of sovereignty to China, civic education has been more prominent in the Hong Kong curriculum. Research shows the relationship between

civic education and media education, with the latter supporting the creation of informed and participatory citizens through necessitating them to become critical of the messages with which they are surrounded (Cheung, 2004: 49).

The introduction of IT is also significant. The media age is having an impact on our students and shaping the types of learners they are becoming. The heavy use of IT could make students addicted to net surfing, but not necessarily help them become critical users of IT. Current students are highly competent in accessing information, being as they are, the Internet generation. However, are students self-directed in their learning? Can they originate ideas or can they merely imitate or reproduce them? In other words, how actively engaged in their learning processes are Hong Kong students and are educators in Hong Kong faced with the situation that Giroux (1988) claims to be the case, that the mass media are turning our populations into receptive spectators rather than active participants? If we want our students to become active or critical thinkers, and more than that, to become empowered learners, the introduction of media education can be useful, and media production could be a useful means to start.

The development of media education is further enhanced by the education reform. Schools are advised to: «help their students develop, through teaching and learning in different key learning areas (KLA), the nine generic skills of collaboration, communication, creativity, critical thinking, information technology, numeracy, problem-solving, self-management and study» (EMB, 2003: 13).

The key terms in this proposal that support media education are «communication, creativity, critical thinking… problem-solving [and] self-management», and these five skills can be developed effectively using media education. The critical apparatus for media education is threefold: observation, interpretation and analysis. The source materials to choose from are wide and varied, and most importantly, current and fluid; they are rich repositories in the search for meaning. Depending on the types of activities used to analyze the media, problem-solving and critical thinking skills can be developed from inquiry into the media. Media education not only helps to motivate students to learn, but can add to its legitimacy in developing critical thinkers, a point which is a central tenet of the proposed curriculum reforms suggested by the EMB.

Most recently, the New Senior Secondary Curriculum has paved the way for the inclusion of more media education as its components appear in the core subjects. Hong Kong is a particularly media-rich city, and students, as the foci of a significant proportion of media messaging, are particularly well positioned to launch into a critical investigation of the media: more simply put, the media are already part of Hong Kong students' daily «curriculum». Integrating them into the classroom as part of students' daily studies, then, seems an organic curricular process.

## 8. Future Research Possibilities

Discussion of media education has been on the rise in recent years, both in a local and an international perspective. More and more countries have adopted media

education in their curricula in one way or another and research has been, and is being, conducted to further examine different aspects of media education. Media education in Asia is a relatively young, but rapidly developing part of the curriculum. Research has been conducted and papers written on various issues concerning media education in Asia. The dominant models of media education in the world are broadly Western and more particularly, drawn from English-speaking countries; the question is whether a similar pattern exists in Asia, where there may be differences in culture, heritage, beliefs, values, education policy, as well as curriculum and pedagogy. Are educators in Asia following the Western model in developing and implementing media education, or are they devising their own models? Media education cannot stand by itself, independent of societal development, technological advancement, cultural values, and media environment, and so it is justifiable to expect different modes of development in different societies. In many Asian countries, there seems to be an increasing official recognition of media education by policy-makers and recent education reforms have provided a platform for the emergence of media education. However, although the significance of media education is noted, media education, as a curriculum, is far from well established, and much still needs to be done. Increased concerted actions are necessary if it is to become a more widespread movement (Cheung, 2008). Cheung is eager to find out the similarities and differences of the development and implementation of media education in different Asian societies and noted that there is considerable variation among Asian societies in terms of the level of development of media education, the degree to which it is integrated across the curriculum, and more generally, the social, economic, educational and political circumstances relevant to its implementation. Such diversity certainly calls for each society to face its own unique challenges and find solutions for itself (Cheung, 2009).

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# 2. History, Policy, and Practices of Media Education in South Korea

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ABSTRACT

The authors begin by providing the historical and social background of Korean media education, which has its roots in civil participation activities in the 1980s. Then, they discuss the legal and governmental policies on media education, focusing on the Broadcasting Act and the diverse programmes provided by governmental organizations, particularly those under the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism. They also analyse good examples of media education practices by teachers' groups, civil society associations and the media industry, in addition to introducing the recent changes in the newly reformed National Curriculum, which includes some elements of media literacy. They conclude by pointing out the need for a more consistent policy on media literacy and a forum to activate discussion on the topic.

KEY WORDS

Media education, media literacy, media environment, curriculum, civil society associations, media industry, media watch, media production.

## 1. Historical and Social Backgrounds

Media education in South Korea has developed in a very independent, sui generis manner. It arose from the television viewers' movement, which was launched in the early 1980s in order to achieve viewer sovereignty over public broadcasting. In 1980, an authoritative regime led by military leaders came to power and tightened its control over the press. Out of the struggle against political oppression, a civic movement arose to reject paying the subscription fee of KBS (Korea Broadcasting System), which was and still is Korea's leading public broadcaster. Beginning in April 1986, this campaign, which was named «The Movement against KBS Subscription Fee», was led by religious organizations (including Christian and Catholic) and women's organizations. It was supported by as much as 80% of the Korean population for approximately three years. During the course of the campaign, media activists transformed the issue into a nationwide television audience movement. Religious groups such as YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) and women's organizations such as Korean Womenlink actively participated in raising the awareness of the television audience. Content analysis, critical analysis and active participation were the main approaches used to educate television viewers. In this way, the history of media education in South Korea is rooted in this civic movement of television viewers (Kim K-T., 2004; 2007).

In the late 1980s, South Korea succeeded in achieving a peaceful transfer of political authority. This political change remarkably improved the freedom of the press, due to the introduction of more commercial television channels and less pressure on public television. These changes in the political and media environments affected the practices of media education in that civil society associations began to focus more on the education of children and young people rather than on the education of television viewers. School teachers began to teach media education, albeit mainly through unsystematic, extra-curricular activities. Since the mid 1990s, young people's interest in film and video production has increased with the popular use of digital camcorders. Many youngsters have learned video production skills at a low cost in youth centres run by local governments. In response to young people's interests in film and video production, the YMCA in Seoul has been holding the yearly «Youth Video Festival» since 1998 (Seoul YMCA, 2007). The Korean Society of Media Education began to hold its national conference on media education in 1997, in order to provide a forum for teachers, practitioners, activists, and academics to share their experiences and to discuss the issues.

Since 2000, the media environment in South Korea has been changing with the rapid development of new media such as the Internet, mobile phones, DMB (Digital Multimedia Broadcasting) and IPTV (Internet Protocol Television). The nationwide survey of media users in late 2006 showed that Korean people watch television for two and a half hours per day, use the Internet for half an hour, listen to the radio for 37 minutes and read newspapers and magazines for 25 minutes and 7 minutes, respectively (Kim K-T, Kang, Sim & al., 2007). In August 2007, there were 35 million Internet users, 15 million ultra high speed Internet subscribers and 45 million mobile phone users among a Korean population of 50 million people (Korea National Internet

Development Agency, 2007). While the old media forms, such as newspapers and television, still exert a powerful influence on Korean society, the social impact of digital media is ever increasing. These changes in the media environment influence the content and nature of media education as it is focusing more on the use of digital cameras, the Internet, computer games and mobile phones (Kim, Y-E, 2008).

## 2. Legal Systems and Governmental Policies

While media education in Korea began as a civic movement, there were few governmental or legal supports in the early stage. However, for the past 10 years, governmental organizations under the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism and the Commission on Youth Protection have been active in supporting media education programmes, developing learning materials, and conducting research in this area. The efforts made by the KCC (Korean Communication Commission), which is the broadcasting and telecommunications regulation body, and governmental organizations under the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism, such as KPF (Korea Press Foundation), KBI (Korean Broadcasting Institute), and the KACES (Korea Arts and Culture Education Service), are particularly noteworthy.

The underlying rationale of governmental support for the promotion of media education is to extend the welfare and rights of the media audience. Most supporting programmes are carried out in the form of financial and infrastructural aids, including funds for the expenses of NGOs' media education activities, training media instructors and sending them to schools, providing in-service training programmes for school teachers, publishing and distributing media textbooks, and more widely, the establishment and management of media centres for public access. Media education thus is taking place mostly outside the school, in informal settings, or even in the formal system, it is taught by media instructors who are not school teachers. The efforts to support media education by the governmental organizations contrast with the few efforts made by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, which is the main governmental body responsible for education in schools. In South Korea, there is a school culture in which obtaining a good score at university entrance examination is regarded as the ultimate goal of the entire schooling. In this context, it seems to be quite difficult for schools to take into serious of media education, which is not recognized as an independent subject for university entrance examination. This situation also explains the lack of contribution of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology to media education.

### 2.1 The Broadcasting Act

While there is no single coherent piece of legislation for media education, the Broadcasting Act has laid out the legal foundations for establishing media education policies. When the Act was revised in 2000 in order to integrate the former Broadcasting Act and Cable Broadcasting Act, legal sections were fortified to enhance the television viewers' rights and to facilitate audience participation in broadcasting, in

terms of providing financial supports for production of audience-participated television programmes and television Ombudsman programmes as well as funding civil society associations' media education activities. In the revised Broadcasting Act, Section 36 dictates that the KCC must collect fees from the public and private broadcasters in order to fund projects to improve the broadcasting and culture in general. Section 38, which clarifies the uses of the fund, states that the fund should also be used for media education for the public interest. In fact, these legal sections have served as a momentum for civil society associations to focus more on media education than on monitoring television programmes and educating television viewers.

The Act has provided the legal basis for broadcasters to have systems that could protect viewers' rights and interests: such systems include setting up the guidelines for self-regulation, the viewers' committee and audience complaints committee together with producing and airing television Ombudsman programmes, audience-participation programmes and the right to reply. Considering that the broadcasting policy before the revised Broadcasting Act was centred on the interests of the broadcasters and programme providers, the revised Act is significant as a policy that emphasizes the rights of television viewers (Kim Y., 2001).

## 2.2. Korean Communication Commission (KCC)

The KCC is a governmental organization that is in charge of Korean broadcasting and telecommunications policies, administration, and regulation. Since 2000, the KCC has provided financial support for media education programmes and research. The total budget allotted to media education for the fiscal year of 2007 was approximately $5 million, which comes from the «Broadcasting Development Fund», according to the Broadcasting Act. The KCC's major undertakings focus on the financial support for media education NGOs, teachers' groups, the establishment and management of local viewers' media centres, financial aid for academic societies that develop textbooks, the implementation of experimental media education schools, and the opening of an online media education archive. The KCC's annual budget is relatively secure, considering that the Broadcasting Development Fund is guaranteed by law to be used for viewers' rights and services. However, the KCC's policy can be criticized in terms of its limited understanding of media education as a service for television viewers.

## 2.3. Korean Broadcasting Institute (KBI)

The KBI, a subsidiary organization of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, was established for the promotion of Korean broadcasting industries. The main focus of the KBI, therefore, is on the training or retraining of broadcasting and digital media professionals and on the extension of the digital broadcasting infrastructure (Choi, 2006). The KBI's supports for media education are being implemented through its provision of in-service training for teachers and media instructors. What is particularly noteworthy is that the KBI administers certification courses for media instructors. Those who complete the prescribed courses of media education can acquire a license for

teaching media education programmes, although, unlike a teacher's license, this certificate is not issued by the central government. While the KBI licence of media instructor seems to be a good step as the efforts for standardizing qualifications for media educator, it seems to have limits in that it is not recognized everywhere in the country nor does it guarantee stable and well-paid jobs.

### 2.4. Korea Press Foundation (KPF)

The KPF has provided training programmes for media professionals, such as former journalists, and sent them to schools to become media education instructors. Since 2000, the KPF has provided in-service training for about 300 media education instructors (a considerable number of these are retired journalists) and sent them into schools to teach media education programmes, which are mostly run as extra-curricular activities. Along with this instructor-dispatching project, the KPF supported the development of 35 volumes of media education textbooks that are used in schools by media education instructors. Despite the major contributions of the KPF, there has been some criticism that media education in their work is an opportunity to create jobs for former journalists, considering that KPF is an organization working for the benefits of journalists and that KPF's media education originally began with a purpose to find new jobs for retired journalists during the Asian economic crisis (Jeong, 2008).

### 2.5. Korea Arts and Culture Education Service (KACES)

KACES is another subsidiary organization of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism. This organization focuses on the promotion of culture and arts education in schools and in society in general. Under the «Artist-in-School programme», KACES has sent professional artists who have completed classroom instruction training to schools across the country. As of 2007, KASEC had provided instructors to about 3,800 elementary, junior high and high schools in various genres of arts and culture, such as Korean classical music, theatre, film, dance and animation. Media education is stressed within these genres, especially in film and animation, with the focus on the appreciation and production of film and animation as art forms rather than a critical understanding of the media in general.

### 2.6. Korea Internet Safety Commission (KISCOM)

KISCOM is another governmental organization that was established in 1995 under the Telecommunication Business Act. It is now integrated into KCSC (Korea Communications Standards Commission), a governmental agency for deliberation on broadcasting and telecommunications contents. KISCOM's aim is to prevent the circulation of harmful information and contents over the Internet and to promote a more ethical information communication culture by classifying Internet contents and providing ranking information to the public. In relation to media education, KISCOM published and distributed a number of Internet education guidebooks and textbooks

especially for parents and youth, such as «Smart Parents, Healthy Kids in the Age of Internet», «Let's Make a Joyful Cyber World». It seems fair to say, however, that KISCOM's activities are more for guidance to sound Internet use rather than for critical media education.

### 2.7. Government Youth Commission (GYC)

Inaugurated as a governmental agency for the protection of young people from harmful environments in 1997, the GYC has implemented a wide range of activities for youth welfare, counsel, and protection from social and cultural harm of which the main cause is believed to be mass media. With a perspective of strong protectionism, the division of media environment in the GYC carries out diverse research and media education programmes. The GYC has been integrated into the Ministry for Health, Welfare and Family Affairs since 2008.

Thus far, the governmental policies on media education in Korea have been carried out by diverse agencies, among which media-related organizations have played a leading role. The focus has been on the protection of young people and on the provision of services for the media audience's welfare and rights. While the diversity of the supporting programmes and the size of the budgets can be evaluated positively, there has been a problem of overlap in terms of the allotment of policy and budgets (Ahn, 2000). In the meantime, governmental financial support for media education is expected to continue, considering that in 2008, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism announced its «5-Year Plan for Broadcasting Industry Promotion» in which a supporting plan for media education is included as part of the digital cultural welfare project.

### 3. Media Education in Schools

### 3.1. Teachers' Groups

In South Korea, media literacy has been taught unsystematically in schools. In the existing curriculum (the 7th National Curriculum, introduced in 1997), media literacy is not included in the content of the subject areas. Instead, the curriculum emphasizes teachers' use of the media and ICT-related skills in order to teach various subjects more effectively (Ministry of Education and Human Resources, 1997a, 1997b). Most teachers were given some media training by local education authorities, but the approach was somewhat limited in that it focused on the media as an aid for teaching rather than as the content in itself (Division of Media Studies, 2005).

In fact, there was a rather hostile attitude towards media education in schools. Most head-teachers and administrators of education authorities were reluctant to support media education even as extra-curricular activities, particularly during the military regime of the 1980s, because media education was associated with the social movement for democracy, which was against the government. Despite such an atmosphere in school and the fact that there was little space for media education in

the curriculum, some individuals and groups of teachers became more interested in media as a teaching subject because of their concerns about the impact of the media and popular culture on children and young people; these people became passionate about media literacy education (Ahn & Jeon, 1999: 205).

Examples of teachers' groups for media literacy include the «Teachers' Movement for Clean Media», the «Division of Media Studies of the Association of Korean Language Teachers», the «Research Group for Media Literacy across the Curriculum», and the «Daejeon Research Group for Arts and Culture Education». These groups were formed after some teachers took an extra media course or after they studied together in the same graduate school. While there has been little governmental support for these groups, each of them has led regular study meetings and seminars and published lesson plans and learning materials such as books or their own websites (e.g., Teachers' Movement for Clean Media, 2003; 2007; Division of Media Studies of the Association of Korean Language Teachers, 2005a; 2005b; Research Group for Media Literacy Across the Curriculum, 2006; Daejeon Research Group for Arts and Culture Education, 2008). They also provided lectures and workshops for media literacy as in-service training for other teachers. Despite the differences of their regional bases and approaches to media literacy, these teachers' groups seem to be effective and successful examples of teachers' learning communities for media literacy within the contexts of school environments (Jeong, H-S, 2008). Policy-makers of various levels of governmental organizations and civil society associations could develop a support system for these teachers' learning communities or work together with them, in order to scale up media literacy rapidly, considering that they can introduce change in schools by co-constructing their knowledge and experiences as well as developing learning materials.

## 3.2. Changes in the Newly Reformed National Curriculum

There are some exciting changes that will be made with the newly reformed National Curriculum of 2007. In contrast to the existing National Curriculum, which hardly has any elements of media literacy in any subject, the newly reformed one includes some elements of media literacy within the content of the compulsory subjects, especially in Korean (mother tongue), Ethics, Social Studies and Practical Studies (Ministry of Education and Human Resources, 2007a, 2007b). In studying the Korean language, students must learn to understand and produce various kinds of media texts alongside oral and written texts. Ethics emphasizes the importance of appropriate behaviours on the Internet and protection of personal information and of privacy. Social Studies includes critical understanding of mass media and popular culture in general and the role of mass media for freedom of speech. Practical Studies approaches computer skills as tools for information retrieval and storage. Considering that these subjects are compulsory for students of years 1-10 (aged 5 to 16, encompassing primary and secondary levels), it is certainly good news that every student will learn about the media to some degree. However, the approaches to the media seem quite limited because they reflect protectionist media perspectives (emphasizing the negative aspects)

or are only somewhat practical (emphasizing functional and technical literacy rather than critical literacy).

At the 'optional, elective stage' of years 11 and 12 (aged 16-18), a new subject termed «Media Language» is introduced as an elective course, with the focus on interpreting and creating meanings with media texts. Media education can be also taught in «Free Activities» class, in which teachers can teach any subject that is considered effective for the development of the students' creativity. The 2007 National Curriculum officially includes «Media Education» as one of the 35 topics that can be studied in the «Free Activities» class for the first time in the history of the National Curriculum in South Korea (Ministry of Education and Human Resources, 2007c: 23). However, media literacy is in competition with 34 other topics, and therefore, it is very unlikely that it will be chosen from amongst topics such as computer skills, book reading and foreign language teaching (English, mostly) which are preferred by schools because of their connectivity with the related curriculum.

In summary, media education has not taken place as an official part of the National Curriculum in South Korea until very recently, and there has been very little training for teachers for critical understanding about the media other than training to use the media for the purpose of teaching other subjects. However, there have been some significant efforts by passionate, self-taught teachers, who have formed their own study groups and published their results. In addition, the newly reformed 2007 National Curriculum shows some significant developments by including media literacy elements in many compulsory subject areas. Building on these changes and developments, it seems to be time for the education policy-makers and authorities to take media literacy education more seriously and provide systematic teacher training and develop learning materials for teachers. Various media literacy teachers' groups could assume important roles in finding effective ways to provide training and supports for teachers and schools. Building on their communities of practice could help decision-makers scale up media literacy at a minimal cost and with quite some effectiveness.

## 4. Media Education by Civil Society Associations

Civil society associations have been the focal point of media education in Korea since the early 1980s, beyond media literacy. Media literacy is part of a wider movement of media education that can also reach adults and relates to lifelong learning. Civil society associations have pursued media education as part of a civil movement. The result is that media education in Korea has aspects of a civil movement such as media watch and criticism of media content. In addition, media education programmes vary in their educational practices, depending on the goals of the civil society associations. Specifically, diverse media education programmes exist, with various values like society watch, disabled persons' rights improvement, environmental protection, increasing public awareness, children and adolescent protection, and gender. These values are reflected on their education programmes for children and activities with adults.

Considering this diversity, the media education offered by civil society associations can be categorized into three closely related areas: media watch, media literacy and media production. Media watch is mainly about monitoring the mass media as part of a national and global media watch movement related to the development of democracy. Media literacy aims to improve the audience's rights, mainly through critical analysis of media content. Media production is not only to develop the audience's media literacy through production but also to allow the audience to actively express their opinions through the media, going beyond analysis and criticism of media content. Thus, media watch and literacy are to improve the public awareness of audience welfare, while media production is a more active type of movement to improve the audience's rights in sync with the realization of public access rights and civic agency. Media education by civil society associations seems to be in complement of media literacy by school teachers, in that media literacy in school emphasizes protection of children and functional use of media whereas media literacy out of school emphasizes critical stance and rights of media.

## 4.1. Media Watch

Media education focused on media watch or media monitoring is provided by the YMCA and the YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association of Korea). «WatchTV» of the YMCA has supported the media monitoring movement and related media education since the early 1990s. Starting with television watch education, the group has operated by monitoring education on cable television, advertising and terrestrial television (Ahn & Jeon, 1999: 193). The YWCA has provided media monitoring education, particularly targeting television and cartoons, in the belief that the media are not playing their expected role as an opinion maker and aggregator, which could make society healthier and sounder (Choi, 2006: 30). Using the report and the information provided by media watch, civil society associations such as YMCA, Korean Womenlink and the «Media Watch Team» of the Citizen's Coalition for Economic Justice ask the media to remove the harmful content discovered by monitoring.

In 1993, civil society associations led by the YMCA took it a step further by staging a more proactive movement, «Turn off your TV». This campaign, which was led by the YMCA's «Viewers' Civil Rights Movement Headquarters» with participation of more than 30 civil society associations, such as the «Association of Parents for True Education», had persisted for about 2 months. The campaign began as an expression of protest against the broadcasting policy of a public broadcasting company, MBC (Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation), which reduced the broadcasting time of a children's television programme in favour of commercial programmes. As a result, the campaign led to the establishment of a television Ombudsman programme that was a self-control mechanism introduced by broadcasting companies (Kim K-T, 2004: 193).

## 4.2. Media Literacy

Media education focused on critical literacy is provided by the Citizens' Coalition for Economic Justice, Korean Womenlink, and Mabius ('Media Criticism on Our Own' in Korean). The «Media Watch Team» of the Coalition runs a training programme for secondary school students to teach them to think critically about media content. Long before media education was provided by schools, Korean Womenlink dispatched media educators to schools, who not only delivered media education know-how but also the significance of media education to schools. This is a case where civil society associations contribute to the expansion of media education's social base by carrying out media education at public education institutions. Lastly, since 1998, Mabius has offered media literacy education, mainly about visual contents, believing that young people need to develop critical understanding about the media (Choi, 2006: 38).

## 4.3. Media Production

This type of training is provided by MediACT and the YMCA. MediACT focuses on production, enabling participants to express their own opinions through the media. This group's programmes aim to create a circular loop by which the audience understand the impact of the media and express their ideas by producing media content (MediACT, 2007: 93). In a similar vein, the YMCA's «Media Workshop for Adolescents» attempts not only to help adolescents understand media production mechanisms by understanding production processes but also to foster their power to use the media as an alternative cultural tool (Choi, 2006: 41). The spread of media production education has improved the social awareness of public access rights and has promoted the importance of fostering individuals' talents for creative expression. Meanwhile, the emergence of media production education has been made possible by the rapid spread of digital technology in Korea.

Media education carried out by Korean various civil society associations is diverse in its purpose and content. Under these circumstances, some of the organizations, including MediAct and Mabius, have been operating the «Media-edu Network» since 2005 to lay the foundation for the qualitative development of media education and to create synergy from diversity. The objective of the «Media-edu Network» is to put in place a communication channel among the various groups concerned with media education to allow them to share information and experience among the member groups.

Media education through civil society associations in Korea reflects some characteristics of Korean society, in particular suppressed freedom of expression and distrust of the media because they have not played their expected role as a public institution since the authoritarian period. In this context, the media education practices by civil society associations are meaningful cases that show the direction that civil society associations' media education should head for in the future in Korean society. They also raise issues of media education methods or contents in the ever-changing media environment and education conditions.

## 5. Media Education by the Media Industry

The media industry has also made important contributions to media education, particularly since the late 1990s. Public and commercial broadcasting companies have contributed through their own television programmes or by providing production training for the general public as well as people working in civil society associations. Internet portals have also been involved in media education for their users.

### 5.1. Media Education by Broadcasting Companies

As for the broadcast media education programmes, «Understanding the Media», which aired on the Education Broadcasting System (EBS) is the first example. The weekly 40-minute show aired from September 1997 to February 1998, with an adolescent target audience (Kim Y-E, 2001). Another example is «Wow! Media Exploration», which was produced in 2002 by EBS and the Foundation of Broadcast Culture for elementary school students. The show offered children information on sound and critical analysis of television, newspapers, radio, video, movies, cartoons, books, advertisements and internet content. Unfortunately, this programme was short-lived due to the lack of continuing interest of the broadcasting company in media education.

Broadcasting companies have also provided video production training for children and the general public to enhance public access to the media. A case in point is the Community Media Centres under the guidance of MBC branches in 6 cities throughout the country. Supported by the MBC foundation, these centers came into being in the late 1990s in response to social demands for public access. MBC's Community Media Centres are noteworthy in that a broadcasting company is directly involved in media production education targeting adults and children. These centres provide media production courses for adults and run outreach programs for children by visiting primary schools. KBS, a leading public broadcasting system in Korea, also provides video production training for the activists of civil society associations using the facilities and equipment of their training centre.

### 5.2. Media Education by Internet Portals

Information and digital technology has developed rapidly in Korea since the late 1990s and this has changed the media education environment significantly. In this context, Internet portals have provided a new, specific type of media education for their users.

Daum Communications (www.daum.net), one of the leading portals in Korea, set up the «Daum Foundation», which is a non-profit organization dedicated to young people's understanding of digital media and the development of communication competence. «Youth Voice», which began in 2002, is an exemplary case of the foundation's projects for media education. This project encourages adolescents to apply for media production funds using their own proposals and then provides supports

with professional advice and production skills. Daum Communications has operated «Daum Media School» since 2006 which aims to promote the creative use of the media as a tool for young people to express and distribute their opinions.

Media education by broadcasting companies and internet portals are different with regard to participants and contents. While broadcasting companies focus on the general public and video production, Internet portals support children and adolescents in their multimedia content production and distribution. Despite innovative and diverse attempts, however, media education by the media industry seems to have limitations in terms of paying too much attention to providing training skills for media production. It seems that more efforts need to be made for the media industry to provide a better environment for communication. This could be achieved with the active and critical participation of their users.

## 6. Conclusion

Media education in Korea emerged with the civil movement to defend freedom of the press and the television audience's right to quality programmes. Because of this unique historical background, media literacy seems to have been seen as part of a wider media education that can reach children and adults for their lifelong learning as well as in formal education settings. Teachers' learning communities for media education also have been developed voluntarily and have a good potential to enhance media education in schools.

Currently, media education in Korea is characterized by its diverse contributors, ranging from governmental organizations to the media industry, and including civil society associations and voluntary teachers' groups. The revised Broadcasting Act in 2000 has provided the legal basis for media education to protect television viewers' rights. Under this Act, governmental organizations began to provide financial and infrastructural support for media education. The Act has also been important for broadcasters; it has compelled them to create media education programmes and has provided production training programmes for the audience for the purpose of public access.

Civil society associations have benefited from the funds of various governmental organizations in terms of running their media education programmes. Teachers have also benefited from in-service training programmes for media education provided by various governmental organizations, although they were mostly one day or five days programmes at best. Schools were also provided with media instructors dispatched by governmental organizations such as KPF and KACES, civil society organizations such as Mabius and Korean Womenlink as well as media industry entities such as MBC's Community Media Centres and Daum Communication's Daum Media School programmes. In contrast to the contributions of media-related governmental organizations, the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology, which is responsible for education in schools, has made few efforts except for the recent reformation of the National Curriculum, which now includes some elements of media literacy.

While there have been a variety of efforts and good examples of policy and practices in media education, there is a strong need for a more consistent and systematic policy for media literacy education. There is a need for a clear definition of media literacy and media education, considering the diversity of media education practices carried out by different organizations and groups. There is also a need for developing a policy for research on media education in order to evaluate the achievements, impacts and effectiveness of the various programmes and to exert accountability on various stakeholders such as government, schools and parents.

While it is good that various governmental organizations have been involved in developing media education policies, there has been a problem of overlap in terms of policy and budget allotment among them. For example, KPF, KACES, MBC's Community Media Centres have similar programmes of training and dispatching media experts (former journalists, film and animation artists, and broadcasting experts, respectively) as instructors in order to send them to schools. Therefore, there is a need for the government to develop a more systematic and effective policy of training and dispatching media experts in various media areas and experiences, in order to connect media education with schools. There is also a need for a more systematic support for in-service training for teachers and their learning communities in media literacy. It seems to be time for the government to establish a «Media Education Committee», which could develop more consistent policies for media education and make decisions on priorities and budget allocations, beyond the overlapping and perhaps conflicting interests of various organizations.

There has been also strong demand for networking and collaborating among all the people concerned with media education, such as policy makers, media industry, media professionals, civil society activists, teachers, and academics, in order to forge a more consistent policy on media literacy. In addition, there is a need for more academic research on the conceptualization and pedagogy of media education. Recently, a new forum for such discussions was set up with the name KRE@ME (Korea Researchers and Educators @ Media Education), in which the authors of this contribution participate. The civil participation activities rooted in the history of Korean media education are the dynamic basis for such a forum, particularly considering the increase in participatory culture that contemporary Korea is experiencing through digital media.

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# 3. Implementing Mandates in Media Education: The Ontario Experience

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ABSTRACT

This analysis presents a report on media literacy education in Ontario. It provides an overview of the curriculum for media literacy that is mandated by the provincial government. Specifically, it describes various approaches for teaching about the media as well as the theory that underpins curriculum documents and classroom practices. The analysis also describes the work of key organizations and partnerships that helped prioritize media literacy education, and offers suggestions for the successful development and implementation of media literacy programs. The conclusion discusses the challenges and future directions for media literacy beyond the Ontario case, focusing on nine key tenets for success in implementation worldwide.

KEY WORDS

### 1. Introduction: Media Education in Ontario

Many educators today believe that in this information age, it is just as important to be literate about screen-based and electronic media as it is to be literate about print. In Ontario, new curriculum documents at the elementary and secondary levels identify the necessity of an expanded definition of literacy. Not surprisingly, the introduction to the documents includes this quote from UNESCO (2003): «Literacy is about more than reading or writing –it is about how we communicate in society. It is about social practices and relationships, about knowledge, language and culture. Those who use literacy take it for granted –but those who cannot use it are excluded from much communication in today's world. Indeed, it is the excluded who can best appreciate the notion of literacy as freedom».

In 2006 and 2007, the Ontario Ministry of Education released revised curriculum documents that mandate media literacy from grades 1 to 12. Specifically, media literacy is now a distinct strand in the Language programme at the elementary level (grades 1-8) and in the English programme at the secondary level (grades 9-12). The curriculum documents identify media literacy as one of four program strands that also include oral communication, reading and writing (Ministry of Education, 2006: 13).

These curriculum documents represent a significant milestone in the history of media education in Ontario. After more than 2 decades of existing on the margins, media literacy has moved to centre stage.

In Ontario, media literacy is defined as «an informed and critical understanding of the nature of the mass media, the techniques used by them and the impact of these techniques». Media literacy also gives students the knowledge and skills «to use the media in an active, critical way» (Ministry of Education, 2006: 156).

The inclusion of media literacy in the curriculum means that the topics and texts being studied in the classroom have changed. Today, elementary students analyze or «read» such texts as storybooks (the old paradigm), DVD covers, cereal boxes, and t-shirt logos. Secondary students explore news reporting on global conflicts, the marketing of feature films and even the social network You Tube. Thematic units in the curriculum often embrace an interdisciplinary approach and address a wide range of topics, including: advertising and public relations; representations of gender, violence and race in the media; the role of the media in global citizenship; and new converging technologies.

Media analysis and production in the curriculum focus on three key areas: how a text is produced (including questions of ownership and control); the ideology and values being conveyed through the media; and the ways audiences are targeted by, and respond to, media texts. Classroom work offers the students the opportunity to analyze and produce a variety of print and electronic stories and develop a critical understanding of the roles that media and technology play in their lives.

Two recent studies examined the use of the media by young people across the country. The Canadian Teachers' Federation (2003) found that 48% of students ages 8-15 have their own television, and watching television is a daily pastime for

75% of students in grades 3-10. Media Awareness Network (2005) found that 37% of students in grades 4-11 have their own computer, 23% have their own cell phone, and 22% have a webcam for personal use. Thirty percent of secondary students have personal websites.

Aware of his students' media use, one English and Media teacher recently stated, «There are few curricular expectations more crucial than media literacy. The ability to navigate a complex and challenging cultural world helps students define themselves within an increasingly anachronistic school system».

There are four overall expectations for students at both the elementary and secondary level in media literacy. Students are expected to:

• Demonstrate an understanding of a variety of media texts.

• Identify a variety of media forms and explain how the conventions and techniques associated with them are used to create meaning.

• Create a variety of media texts for different purposes and audiences, using appropriate forms, conventions and techniques.

• Reflect on and identify their strengths as media interpreters and creators, areas for improvement, and the strategies they found most helpful in understanding and creating media texts (Ministry of Education, 2006: 147).

## 2. A Theoretical Framework

Based on the expectations outlined in the curriculum documents, teachers develop programmes and / or units of study that will enable students to demonstrate the expectations stated for each grade level. In developing these programmes, it is important for teachers to have a strong conceptual framework. The following eight key concepts, devised by the Association for Media Literacy (AML), provide a theoretical base for all media literacy in Ontario, and give teachers a common language and framework for discussion. These concepts underpin the curriculum documents and provide a strong organizational framework, as well as a number of useful entry points for studying the media.

• All media are constructions. Media present carefully crafted constructions that reflect many decisions and are the result of many determining factors. Much of our view of reality is based on media messages that have been pre-constructed and have attitudes, interpretations and conclusions already built in. The media, to a great extent, present people with versions of reality.

• Each person interprets messages differently. People who watch the same TV show or visit the same Web site often do not have the same experience or come away with the same impression. Each person interprets or negotiates a message differently based on age, culture, life experiences, values and beliefs. Audiences are capable of accepting certain messages and rejecting others, based on their own personal background.

• The media have commercial interests. Most media are created for profit; advertising is generally the biggest source of revenue. Commercials are the most obvious means of generating revenue, although advertising messages take many forms, including product placement (paying to have a product prominently displaying in programmes or movies), sponsorships, prizes, pop-up ads and surveys on the Internet, celebrity endorsements or naming a stadium or theatre.

• The media contain ideological and value messages. Producers of media messages have their own beliefs, values, opinions and biases. These can influence what gets told and how it is told. Producers must choose what will and will not be included in media texts, so there are no neutral or value-free media messages. As these messages are often viewed by great numbers of viewers, they can have great social and political influence. We need to decode media messages about such issues as the nature of the «good life», the virtue of consumerism, the role of women, the acceptance of authority, and unquestioning patriotism.

• Each medium has its own «language», techniques, codes and conventions. Each medium creates meaning differently using certain vocabulary, techniques and styles, or codes and conventions. In a movie or TV show, when the picture dissolves, it indicates a passage of time. Hot links and navigation buttons indicate you can find what is needed on a Web site. A novelist must use certain words to create setting and characters, while other media use images, text and sound. Over time, people understand what each technique means, become fluent in the «languages» of different media and can appreciate their aesthetic qualities. Developing media literacy skills enables learners not only to decode and understand media texts, but also to enjoy the unique aesthetic form of each. The enjoyment of media is enhanced by an awareness of how pleasing forms or effects are created.

• The media have commercial implications. Media literacy includes an awareness of the economic basis of mass media production. Networks look for audiences to be delivered to sponsors. Knowledge of this allows students to understand how programme content makes them targets for advertisers and organizes viewers into marketable groups. The issue of ownership and control is of vital importance at a time when there are more choices but fewer voices. Ninety percent of the world's newspapers, magazines, television stations, films, and computer software companies are owned by eight corporate conglomerates.

• The media have social and political implications. An important dimension of media literacy is an awareness of the broad range of social and political effects stemming from the media. The changing nature of family life, the use of leisure time and the results of televised political debates are three such examples. The mass media can serve to legitimize societal values and attitudes and reinforce positions of cultural dominance and power. The media also have a major role in mediating global events and issues from civil rights to terrorism.

• Form and content are closely related in the media. Making the form / content connection relates to the thesis of Marshall McLuhan that «the medium is the message».

That is, each medium has its own special grammar and technological bias and shapes the content in unique ways. Thus, different media might report the same event but convey different impressions and different messages (Association for Media Literacy, 2005).

## 3. How did We Get Here? The Story of the AML

Ontario was the first educational jurisdiction in North America to make media education a mandatory part of the curriculum. One group is largely responsible for the continuing successful development of media education in Ontario: the Association for Media Literacy (AML). The AML is a voluntary, non-profit organization made up of teachers, librarians, consultants, parents, cultural workers, and media professionals dedicated to promoting media literacy. Founded in 1978, the Association for Media Literacy was the first comprehensive organization for media literacy teachers in Canada.

In the late 1960s, the first wave of media education began in Canada under the banner of «screen education» which focused on film and television. In 1969, CASE (Canadian Association for Screen Education) sponsored the first large meeting of media teachers at Toronto's York University. As a result of budget cuts and a back-to-the-basics philosophy that dominated the 1970s, this first wave of enthusiasm faded. However, due to the dedication and perseverance of small groups of media educators, media education steadily gained momentum in the 1980s and 1990s.

In 1986, the Ontario Ministry of Education and the Ontario Teachers' Federation invited members of the AML Executive to write the «Media Literacy Resource Guide» for teachers. This landmark publication has been used in many English-speaking countries and has been translated into French, Italian, Japanese, and Spanish. Prior to the release of the «Resource Guide», the Ministry arranged for the AML authors to give a series of in-service training days to teachers across Ontario.

Also in 1986, Ontario's Ministry of Education released new guidelines that emphasized the importance of teaching media education as part of the regular English curriculum in grades 7-12. The AML responded by planning two successful international media education conferences at the University of Guelph in 1990 and 1992. Each conference attracted over 500 participants from around the world.

In the early 1990s, in the back-to-basics climate of educational reform in Ontario, AML successfully lobbied the Ministry of Education for the inclusion of a media studies component in the elementary language curriculum, as well as a media studies strand in every English course at the secondary level and a stand-alone course in media at the senior secondary level. This was a major achievement which laid the groundwork for the revised curriculum documents that would come later.

In 1998, the AML received international recognition for its work. In presenting an award to the AML, the World Council on Media Education described the AML as «the most influential media education organization in North America». The year

2000 brought another major achievement with Summit 2000: Children, Youth and The Media –the largest international conference ever held in the world. This Toronto conference brought together 1,500 delegates from 55 countries and provided a unique opportunity for those who use and teach about the media to meet and talk with those who produce and distribute it.

More recently, in 2005 and 2006, members of the AML executive were involved in the Ministry of Education writing teams responsible for the revised elementary Language and secondary English documents. For the first time, media literacy was mandated in every grade from 1-12. Also in 2005, AML executive members wrote the «Think Literacy» documents for media literacy, which provide teachers with strategies for teaching media literacy in Language Arts and English classrooms.

Along with the provincial government, the AML works with faculties of education, school boards, media industries, and parent and community groups on a number of media literacy initiatives:

• The AML was involved in planning the first National Media Education Week, along with the Canadian Teachers Federation and Media Awareness Network. Special events and festivals are held across the country to celebrate the work of students and teachers.

• Members of the AML wrote and currently teach Additional Qualifications courses in Media offered through York University and the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto. The courses provide teachers with much-needed professional development. Upon completion of the 3-part programme, teachers receive a «specialist» certification.

• The AML offers a series of events for members and the general public, some available as web casts, to promote media education and offer professional development for teachers. The AML website (www.aml.ca) provides teachers with access to lesson plans, articles and reviews, various postings for news and upcoming events, and links to other significant media sites.

• The AML supported the genesis of sister organizations in most Canadian provinces and their umbrella organization, CAMEO, and originated the concept and purpose of the «Media Awareness Network».

The AML recently celebrated its 30th anniversary. Many people find it hard to believe that it is possible for a voluntary, non-profit organization to have achieved so much. The success of the AML is really due to a small, dedicated group of individuals who are classroom teachers –people passionate about media literacy and who recognize its value in the lives of their students. These teachers understand the importance of creating classrooms and learning opportunities that include students' knowledge and experience, and prepare them for life and work in our information age. These teachers have developed resources, lobbied government officials, networked with international colleagues, planned conferences and events, and lectured widely on the importance of media literacy. Since the early days of the AML, members have presented workshops across Canada, and in Australia, Japan, Europe, Latin

America and the United States. The success of media literacy in Ontario is due to their efforts. The «payback» for their years of hard work is the legacy that they have created for media literacy in Ontario and across Canada.

## 4. Implementation

### 4.1. Theory

Canadian teachers are, like most informed media educators, participating in an eclectic circus. They are enthusiastic pragmatists, selecting from a rich menu of critical, cultural, and educational theories and filtering them for classroom use.

As a generalization, there seems to be a wide consensus about contextualizing media education within the frameworks of the British inspired «cultural studies» paradigm, an interdisciplinary approach to the construction of knowledge which problematizes texts and foregrounds representations of gender, race and class. The critical premises behind the 1986 «Media Literacy Resource Guide» (strongly influenced at the time by UK media educator Len Masterman) and the media textbooks –the majority written by the AML Executive– are compatible with comparable material emanating from Australia and the UK. Of paramount importance is the influence of the discourses that are attached to the subjects that teachers are trained in, in most cases English.

Audience study has fore-grounded the importance of the pleasures of the text. It has helped teachers conceive of viewers as social subjects with multiple subjectivities. Similarly, texts are now seen as being polysemic –they convey many meanings and hence elicit many different readings.

Audience study can lead teachers to learn about interpretive communities – blogs on North American television programmes, web sites containing information and gossip on daytime soap operas, feature films, or the latest video game. When teachers examine their students' cultural practices through knowledge of audience theory, they cannot help but change the dynamics of their classrooms.

The emphasis on finding out what the students already know about media and how they make sense of it should be the starting points for all media teachers. One of the strengths of media literacy education is that it validates the knowledge that students already have about the media, it connects students' learning to the world beyond the classroom and provides opportunities for authentic learning. It also validates and strengthens the students' position within the institution, by bringing their «outside» reality into the classroom, and building a space that is both authentic and transformational.

The work of UK media educator David Buckingham and his colleagues has contributed significantly. The recent work of educators such as Julian McDougall and Andrew Burn has increasingly emphasized the pedagogical value of production (as opposed to analysis only) as a means of developing and reinforcing conceptual understandings.

## 4.2. Classroom Practices

There are several approaches for teaching media literacy. Many teachers make use of more than one approach in the classroom, shaping the curriculum to meet the needs and interests of their students. Whichever is pursued, there is a strong emphasis on the importance of analysis –the deconstruction of a media text or message, and production –learning how media industries operate and developing the skills and knowledge needed for students to produce their own stories.

• A medium-based approach involves the study of a particular medium, such as television or film. The characteristics, strengths and weaknesses of a particular medium are explored, often within a particular historical or social context.

• A thematic approach involves exploring a particular theme across several media. An issue such as gender representation can be identified and examined in terms of how it is communicated in a variety of media texts, how it has been created, and how it affects audiences.

• In many classrooms, a media studies unit is a stand-alone unit within an English course. Teachers select a genre or theme and study it exclusively for two to three weeks.

• Integrating media studies into other areas of the curriculum is a holistic, multi-perspectival approach that can be beneficial for creating authentic learning experiences for students. This approach recognizes that because of the pervasiveness of the media in our society, it is difficult to study the media in isolation. This approach emphasizes the importance of text and context: the analysis of any media text is accompanied by a study of the relevant historical, social, political and economic contexts.

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**Thematic Approaches: Two examples**

• **Global Education.** Thematic units integrating global education and media literacy have become popular in recent years, as a way of addressing and updating citizenship education in schools and responding to increased emphasis on character development. Integrating media literacy and global education emphasizes the importance of active involvement with the media, connecting it to democratic rights, active citizenship, and technological literacy.

Media literacy and global education involve analyzing media texts for the representations of local and global events and issues and the ways in which these representations help to shape the meanings and importance we assign to them. Teachable moments such as the coverage of the Asian tsunami, the events of 9/11 or the death of Princess Diana require in-depth media analysis. Ultimately, the goal of these integrated programmes is to provide students with the opportunity to examine the ways in which the media represent the events and challenges of our global community and develop an understanding of themselves and their place in it. Central to this are issues of media ownership and control and questions of access, choice and range of expression.

• **Popular Culture.** When teachers are encouraged to study a variety of texts and make some surprising cultural insights, it is usually through a unit on popular culture that we are offered such possibilities. Popular culture embodies the dreams, desires and aspirations of society, opening up pleasures as well as controversies like: Will video games ever become respectable? Popular culture includes celebrity culture and horror films, shopping malls and Barbie dolls, rap

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artists, and the annual extravaganza known as the Superbowl. Any one of these media texts would constitute an in-depth curriculum in itself.

Using the «key concepts» as an organizing framework, teachers can provide a rewarding, experiential potpourri of diverse, popular culture texts, raising issues and making insights based on emerging socio-economic, political and aesthetic messages.

## 4.3. Programme Implementation

At the classroom level, the implementation of media literacy curriculum has varied from school to school and district to district. Some school boards have established media education as a priority and have supported it with ongoing in-service and the appointment of curriculum consultants for whom media literacy is a focus. Other school boards have left the implementation to individual departments within schools.

Ontario teachers' federations –Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA) and Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF)– have recently become more involved in supporting professional development for teachers in media literacy through organizing conferences and sponsoring teacher attendance. The fact that there have been waiting lists for some of these conferences attests to teacher interest and the demand for professional development.

The dedication of the individual teacher greatly influences the extent and quality of media education in the classroom. Associations such as Ontario's AML continue to be the strongest ongoing supports for teachers pursuing expertise in media education.

## 4.4. Partnerships and Resources

There are a number of individuals and organizations that have had a significant impact on the growth of media literacy. Partnerships have been key in providing the support that teachers need for professional development, and for accessing and incorporating relevant material in the classroom.

There are a number of excellent media education texts written by Canadians since 1987. The more recent ones include the second edition of «Mass Media and Popular Culture» (Nelson Education, Canada, 1996) by Barry Duncan et al. and «Media Sense» (Nelson Education, Canada, 1998) by David Booth et al, which is in three parts –one for each of grades 4, 5, and 6.

The Media Awareness Network or MNet (www.media-awareness.ca) was formed to become a clearinghouse for educational resources. MNet hosts a large database of sample teaching materials from many sources, both Canadian and international, in English and in French. MNet has also developed some of its own resources for parents, students and teachers, and has developed valuable «Web Awareness» resources for helping students develop critical thinking skills for using the Internet.

For many years, CHUM Limited was an invaluable industry partner in promoting media literacy. In 2007, CTVglobemedia acquired CHUM Limited and is continuing

as the leading media company that offers support to media educators and media education organizations. By providing commercial-free original programming and accompanying study guides written by media educators (www.muchmusic.com/mediaed/index.asp), by funding media education initiatives and institutes throughout Canada, by donating airtime and web space to the issue, by providing funding to media education organizations, and by promoting National Media Education Week, CTVglobemedia encourages a heightened awareness about the nature of the media. The company has also produced a number of Public Service Announcements about media literacy which are broadcast on their many local and specialty television stations across the country.

The media literacy programming developed by CTVglobemedia stations has proven to be very popular with teachers and students. Using recording artists and their music as an entry point, the MuchMusic-produced programming has explored such issues as role of the artist in social and political activism, the sponsorship of musicians and concerts by cigarette and beer companies, and the representations of sexuality in music videos. Bravo!, Canada's arts channel owned by CTVglobemedia, offers «Beyond the Screen», a programme which examines a first-run theatrical feature from a media literacy perspective and provides a study guide on its website www.beyondthescreen.com .

Concerned Children's Advertisers has developed PSAs and curriculum resources on media literacy for elementary students. The resource kit «TV and Me» encourages children to think critically about the images and information they receive through television.

As a country whose population of 30 million stretches for some 4,000 miles across a continent, we are aware of the challenges to professional development on both the provincial and national levels. Produced by Face to Face Media and the Jesuit Communication Project (JCP), «Inside Plato's Cave» is a 13 module, online course in media literacy for teachers which will be available in 2009. Face to Face Media and the JCP were also responsible for developing «Scanning Television», a collection of short videos copyright cleared for classroom use.

In Ontario, one of the long term strategies of the AML is to work with educational institutions such as York University and the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto to develop opportunities for those preparing to enter the teaching profession to learn about media literacy. Collaboration with the Centre for Media and Culture in Education (CMCE) and the Media Education Working Group (MEWG) at OISE, as well as the National Film Board (NFB) has resulted in the development of a number of events and resources for teachers.

## 5. Factors For Success: Beyond the Ontario Case
## 5.1. Nine Key Tenets for Media Literacy Development

The Ontario experience reveals nine factors which are crucial to the successful development of media education.

• Media literacy, like other innovative programmes, must be a grassroots movement, led by teachers who know what programs are important for their students' life and work today. Teachers need to take a major role in lobbying for media literacy.

• Educational authorities must give clear support to such programmes by mandating the teaching of media education within the curriculum, establishing guidelines and resources, and by ensuring curricula are developed and materials are available.

• Faculties of Education must hire staff capable of training future teachers in this area. There should also be academic support from tertiary institutions in the writing of curricula, in sustained consultation and in research.

• In-service training at the school district level must be an integral part of programme implementation.

• School districts need consultants who have expertise in media literacy and who will establish communication networks.

• Suitable textbooks and audio-visual materials which are relevant to the country/ area must be available.

• A teacher support organization must be established for the purposes of workshops, conferences, dissemination of newsletters and the development of curriculum units. Such a professional organization must cut across school boards and districts to involve a cross section of people interested in media literacy.

• There must be authentic evaluation instruments for media programmes and student achievement.

• Because media education involves such a diversity of skills and expertise, there must be collaboration between teachers, parents, researchers and media professionals (Pungente, 2002).

## 5.2. The Future of Media Literacy

While media literacy education has made remarkable progress in Ontario, there are significant challenges still to be addressed. Though the curriculum documents have been developed for media education in Ontario schools, support for professional development and teacher resources at the institutional level –i.e. government or faculties of education– has been scarce.

Media Awareness Network's (2000) research into the status of media education found that «officials from provincial Ministries of Education repeatedly stated that although media was strongly integrated into the English Language Arts programme as another kind of «text», there was little professional development activity attached to this new discipline, and no money for new resources».

Media Awareness Network (2000) also found that there are other areas of concern. «Teacher apathy, overwhelming curriculum changes, high demands for accountability and reporting, a lack of resources, and pressures to integrate new technology into classroom learning, have all contributed to a general unwillingness on the part of teachers to 'go the extra mile' for additional professional development».

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The greatest obstacle to providing professional development opportunities for teachers seems to be funding and accessibility. While the provincial curriculum documents are in place now and media literacy is a mandatory part of that curriculum, few programmes in teacher training have followed. Teachers continue to look to their school boards, federations and the Association for Media Literacy for professional development opportunities.

It is hoped that programmes offered by Canada's 35 faculties of education will begin to include teacher training in media literacy in order to prepare new teachers to implement the new curriculum. Currently, some faculties are beginning to introduce media literacy into their pre-service programmes, but so far instruction in this area for teacher candidates has been extremely limited. Every year, hundreds of new teachers enter the profession with little or no media literacy training.

Whatever the future holds for teacher education, there are several topics and issues that will continue to be important in programmes for both teachers and students. Four examples are listed below.

• Media and Globalization. The increasing trend towards globalization of culture has been fuelled, in part, by trans-national media corporations and recent mergers. This trend suggests some important theoretical and practical challenges to issues of cultural sovereignty, democracy and national identity. Also worth considering is the impact of the media on the notion of global citizenship and what we are told unites us as a global community (Is it our humanity or our consumer goods?). The impact of the media on local and national cultures will continue be a topic for the classroom, as will concerns about access to, and control of, media technologies.

• Web Literacy. New digital media, including the use of Facebook, Myspace and You Tube have created collaborative, participatory media which have transformed media culture and youth in the last five years. Of paramount importance for a relevant classroom, media education must conceptualize and incorporate these new dimensions into media studies –in other words, media literacy must also include web literacy. Web literacy provides students with the opportunity to evaluate information presented in an on-line environment and assess the benefits and liabilities of social networking. Students also learn to synthesize multiple sources of information; to consider and weigh issues of copyright and privacy; to understand the impact of social networking on politics and global issues; to consider deeper issues of virtual realities and futuristic notions of cyber-existence.

• Media Literacy Across the Curriculum. English teachers are usually the ones who are required to implement media studies even though it could be placed comfortably in the social sciences. Analysis of documentary films is needed in history; media and gender studies should be part of sociology. The crucial point here is that all subject areas can benefit from teaching 'about' and not just 'through' the media, otherwise educators neglect the use of important critical tools of media literacy.

• Public vs. Private Space. Since the 1990s, teachers have had to respond to major societal changes, including the impact of corporate intervention in the classroom.

Culture critics have alerted teachers, decision makers and opinion leaders to the erosion of public space because of the corporatization of education. Companies such as McDonalds offer teachers free business spreadsheets; Coca-cola offers marketing kits to school libraries; Monsanto offers science resources for teachers. Even more controversial have been the junk food and clothing commercials that are part of Channel One –a 10 minute current affairs broadcast with 2 minutes of commercials that is available to schools in the U.S. That Canada was able to defeat the equivalent network (the Youth News Network) is a triumph, but the school system is still vulnerable to the seductions of sponsored programmes and media technology. If media education is to be relevant, it must address this controversial trend.

### 5.3. Media Literacy: An Opportunity and An Entitlement

Though educators still face challenges in the area of teacher training in Ontario, and indeed across the country, a number of factors indicate significant growth in the practice of media education.

With the release of the revised curriculum documents in 2006 and 2007 and media literacy officially «on the books», enthusiastic teachers have the opportunity to open up their classrooms to the study of media and popular culture and advocate at the school and district level for resources and professional development.

New teachers entering the profession seem to be willing to embrace the expanded definition of literacy, and less intimidated by new technologies that are available for use in classrooms. These teachers often bring an energy and enthusiasm for media studies and pop culture to the classroom, perhaps because of their own contemporary media interests and involvement. New teachers also seem to be open to new pedagogies and the possibilities offered by interdisciplinary programmes.

Developments in critical pedagogy have also had a positive impact on media literacy. This has included a shift in recent years to student-centred learning, where teachers are involved in less of a banking model of education, and more of a transformational one. Critical pedagogy, with its focus on the construction of knowledge, and on institutions and power, privileges students' experiences and knowledge in the curriculum. It also emphasizes authentic learning by providing students with the opportunity to transfer new knowledge and skills to life and work beyond the classroom and apply this knowledge in practical ways.

Canadian media educators have always recognized the importance of the inquiry process and the acquisition of critical thinking skills. Media literacy students are given the opportunity to examine the stories and information they're receiving today, and explore why these stories are being created and how they're responding to them. Classroom dialogue often involves such questions as: «What can you learn from media stories and images, about our society and culture, and about how you want to live? From whose perspective are these stories being told? Whose voices are missing? What is your story? How can media and technology be used to convey the identity, beliefs and values important to you?» These questions are part of a dialogic approach

that enables students to develop essential skills in critical analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

Ultimately, the value of media literacy education lies in helping students develop knowledge and understanding of how the media operate, how they construct meaning, how they can be used, and how to evaluate the information they present. Media education should be seen as an entitlement both for our students and for the community at large. The fact that much of our media use now is for creative and/or for social networking purposes should remind us that media education has become participatory, collaborative, and as one teacher said, «Let's not forget, enjoyable». While some educators insist on denigrating the mass media and popular culture and wish to shield young people from its alleged harmful effects, we should make the case that our endeavour is not about protection but rather about preparation. As the AML (1989) succinctly puts it, today «media literacy is a life skill».

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# 4. Making the Introduction of Multi-media Technologies Count in Education Reform in Africa: The Case of Ghana

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ABSTRACT

This contribution reviews the introduction of old and new information communication technologies in Ghanaian education. It points out how the recent proliferation of multi-media technologies in the country has ultimately encouraged the introduction of ICTs in education. However, the author argues that much of the move to introduce these new technologies into schools and colleges has not reflected the need to re-conceptualise teacher education curriculum practices to base its foundations on constructivist ideas about knowledge and its production. Without this, reforms to introduce new information communication technologies in classrooms risk becoming tools that are again used to reinforce old traditions of teaching and learning based on uncritical transmission of knowledge. Finally, the author argues that changes to the teacher education curriculum in Ghana, and elsewhere in Africa, should also reflect the new professional learning identities and learning experiences that ICT and other media communication tools are meant to foster in the classroom.

KEY WORDS

Education reform, ICTs, pedagogy, teacher education, curriculum development, competences, child-centred teaching.

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## 1. Introduction

In the last 25 years, Ghana has experienced a number of reforms to restructure and improve the delivery of education as a public service. None of these reforms have included or incorporated media literacy as a part of curriculum reforms. Nevertheless, the awareness and attempts to use a wide variety of media communication tools and information technologies to expand educational access and quality have been part of reform thinking and planning. Two main approaches have been used to introduce first old media communication tools (e.g. radio) and more recently new communication technologies (e.g. computers) into education. The lessons from these attempts needed to be drawn and their potential to improve educational quality in Ghana need to be considered. Essentially, for much to be gained from the introduction of new communication technologies in education, reforms must start with significant changes to the traditional teacher education curriculum so that prospective teachers become more accustomed to using them in carrying out aspects of classroom teaching. Unless this happens the benefits expected are unlikely to be deep and lasting since traditional authoritarian notions about teaching and learning runs deep in the professional culture of Ghanaian teachers, as in many other cultures in Africa and elsewhere, and thus requires a fundamental shift in the way in which teachers' organise classroom learning for new multi-media or ICT-enriched pedagogies to be assimilated.

## 2. Using Radio in Education Service Delivery

Ghana is known to have had one of the best educational systems in sub-Sahara Africa from colonial times well into the late 1960s. This changed from the early 1970s when its faltering economy precipitated steep decline in the quality of its education system (World Bank, 2004). In 1987, new education reforms were initiated to revive Ghana's educational system and radio was seen as an important tool for improving access to instructional content. Although, before the reforms, radio had been used to broadcast educational programmes, it was felt that, because it had lacked inputs from educational practitioners, programme content and methods of delivery were poor. In fact, much of the programmes focused on transmission of knowledge with few opportunities for two-way critical dialogue between teachers and learners (World Bank, 1989). The programmes were transmitted by the national broadcasting media which devoted two hours of airing time a day to primary, junior secondary, senior secondary and teacher training institutions. In total, this came to about ten hours of educational programmes per week which were divided into 50 slots for secondary and teacher training institutions. Generally, these school programmes were not cost effective given the small number of listeners they reached. Table 1 shows the time allotted and audience reach of the broadcasts. About half allotted time went to senior secondary and teacher training both of which constituted only 7 percent of the listening audience.

| Levels and Number of Grades | Number of Slots Allocated | Approximate number of potential listeners per grade |
|---|---|---|
| Primary II-VI | 16 | 200,000-300,000 |
| JSS 1 & II | 34 | 160,000-180,000 |
| Senior Secondary I-V | 30 | 20,000-30,000 |
| Teacher Training I-IV | 20 | 2,000-3,000 |

Table 1: Radio Programme Allotment For Pre-tertiary Education Pre 1987 Education Reforms.
Source: World Bank (1989).

An extract of one of these broadcast illustrates (Figure 1) just how focused they were on transmission of knowledge using a one-way communication format to convey subject content material. If they were going to contribute to productive learning, a format which allowed students to engage in real dialogue with the teacher and gave voice to their understandings and insights was essential. In addition, classroom teachers would have had to organise relevant learning materials prior to the broadcast and prepared to raise new issues for further discussion after the broadcast.

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**GBC Sample Scripts**

**School Broadcast – Life Skills Series**

**Lesson V**

Teacher: Good morning children. Today we shall have a short test before we take the day's lesson. Take your pens and papers. Complete the following sentences by supplying the missing words:

• The size of your body, the colour of your skin and the height of your body may be signs of Heredity from your parents

• The way you look, act, think and behave all go together to make your Personality […]

Now children our topic for today is the sources of food that we eat in Ghana. Some foods grow well in certain areas… for example, millet, rice and guinea corn grows very well in the Northern and the two Upper Regions.

Two dishes that are prepared from millet for example are Tuo Tsafi and Fula… Children, can you think of at least one dish, prepared from guinea corn and two from rice grown in the North. In addition there are guinea fowls and other birds which are killed for food...

Now children make a list of all the foods that are grown in the area where you are and the ones that your mother buys from the market too. Try to put them in 3 groups according to the list we have just discussed i.e. 1) Grow foods; 2) Protective foods; and 3) Energy foods

(World Bank 1989: Annex 11-2)

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Figure 1: Extract of Radio Broadcast to Schools

Although the broadcasts were accompanied by teachers' guides and pupil workbooks, in reality few schools got the guides before the broadcast (World Bank, 1989). Therefore there was little potential for the programmes to make an impact on classroom learning beyond the level of transmitting factual knowledge. Despite the limitations of radio broadcasting, Ghana's 1987 education reformers were still keen

on using this medium to present educational courses to schools and colleges. Reformers argued that earlier programs did not include curriculum specialists, teachers, or input from subject associations (e.g. science and mathematics teacher associations), who were in a better position to advice on which material was appropriate for radio and how it could be transmitted effectively. The new idea was to use school radio broadcasts to teach topics that teachers generally found difficult using subject experts with deeper understanding of the issues. Basically, education reformers saw radio as serving three main purposes under the new education reforms –as a direct teaching tool, as a learning resource, and as a medium for enriching conventional teaching. And yet, for each of these, the radio has limitations. Although some of the programmes discussed new pedagogical approaches and encouraged teachers to write to the producers with their questions, the interaction was still didactic and uncritical. As time went on, the programmes were used to propagate ideas behind basic education reforms which were mainly about education for self-employment and rural development (World Bank, 1989 for a fuller discussion). Later, programmes for senior secondary students were abolished and more air time allotted to the primary school level where the bulk of new investments in education was going.

The main limitation of using radio to transmit education programmes is that it is simply not the most effective tool for demonstrating more interactive classroom discourse which shows the importance of learners' background and learning experiences. This is still the case even though new information communication technologies provide new opportunities to widen access to knowledge and create diverse uses of such knowledge. The capacity of teachers to maximize the benefits remains largely limited because of a deep rooted teacher-centred professional culture existing in schools and teacher education institutions that goes beyond the technology itself (Akyeampong, 2003). Before discussing the challenges new information communication technologies face, it is necessary to consider briefly how democratic reforms from the early 1990s set the scene for greater use of multi-media communication tools in Ghanaian education. Coincidently, this was also the period of general education reforms in many African countries which were undergoing political changes and moving towards more open societies. It is therefore not surprising that as those countries in Africa start dismantling their autocratic political systems, media and information communication technologies become more accessible and appear to aid the democratization of their societies.

## 3. The Liberalising Influence of Democracy on Media, Information and Communication Technology in Education

Ghana has had its fair share of political turmoil as an African country. Following a promising political and economic start after independence in 1957, press freedom and democratic governance suffered severe setbacks as a result of a succession of coups that curtailed freedoms and produced a culture of silence in Ghanaian society. Democratic governance emerged once again after the government of Flt Lt Rawlings who had come into power through a military coup in 1982, initiated social and political

reforms culminating in a new constitution in 1992. This new constitution paved the way for new press freedoms which led to an increase in the number of privately-owned newspapers and magazines, the proliferation of privately owned television and radio services and broadcast, and an expansion in video film making and exhibition.

As the economy recovered after the years of decline in the 1970s, there was resurgence in investments in education led by the World Bank and other international development institutions, like UNESCO. The investments went primarily to improve facilities and infrastructure in basic education and gradually extended to the secondary and teacher education sectors. The 1987 education reforms had three stated goals:

- To expand and make access more equitable at all levels of education.
- To improve pedagogic efficiency and effectiveness.
- To make education more relevant by increasing the attention paid to problem-solving, environmental concerns, vocational and technical training and general skills training.

A significant change was the restructuring of education from 17 to 12 years, which produced savings to improve access to basic education and the quality and quantity of school infrastructure and instructional materials. The new structure of basic education consisted of nine years made up of six years primary and three years junior secondary education. The school curriculum was revised to include more practical subjects and in 1995 further reforms dubbed «Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education» (FCUBE) were introduced mainly to tackle the problem of educational quality. Evaluation and impact studies suggest that both the 1987 education reforms and FCUBE succeeded in reversing education decline —basic school enrolments increased by over 10 percentage points from 1987 to 2003, but quality remained difficult to improve (World Bank, 2004). From the late 1990s on, a number of interventions that were supported by donor institutions such as the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) introduced new syllabuses, textbooks and teaching guides and lately private/public partnerships have joined in to introduce ICTs into mainstream education as part of the efforts to improve educational outcomes (GOG 2002; MOE, 2008). It was the 1992 constitution which had introduced liberal and democratic governance that seems to have encouraged the private sector at national and international level to support public educational initiatives in schools with a strong emphasis on student-centred learning. Some of this support took the form of investments in school infrastructure and equipment, and lately the establishment of computer laboratories in secondary and technical vocational institutions. Somehow these are perceived as initiatives and equipments that are going to transform the student learning experience and prepare students to participate in the technologically driven global economy.

## 4. ICTs in Education: Panacea For Improving Educational Quality or Reinforcing Older Traditions of Education?

Almost without exception, all sectors of education in Ghana have witnessed widespread introduction of ICTs in the classroom. They have become popular infrastructure for school improvement. Prominent developments of this kind include the following partnerships either with Inter-Governmental Organizations like

UNESCO or NEPAD or with private sector international corporations (MOE, 2008):

- The Ghana e-Schools and Communities Initiative (GeSCI), which is a collaborative venture between the Ministry of Education and ORACLE and CISCO Consortia, and the NEPAD e-Schools initiative. It has been implemented in six out of the ten regions in the country. Each participating school has been equipped with a computer laboratory consisting of 25 computers, satellite internet connectivity and other state of the art equipment for e-Learning.

- Four hundred desktop Computers have been supplied to the thirty-eight Teacher Training Colleges in early 2007 under a Ghana National Commission for UNESCO Initiative.

- An online portal «skoool.gh» and a DVD-based resource for teaching and learning of mathematics and science for Junior and Senior High Schools has been developed in collaboration with INTEL Corporation and was launched in 2008.

- ICT-literacy as a subject has been introduced in the curriculum of all pre-tertiary education (primary, secondary, technical and vocational education). Much of this curriculum focuses on computer skills.

- New syllabuses for the 2007 Education Reforms have been digitised and captured on Compact Disks (CDs) for distribution to all Districts and Schools. They include ICT literacy.

Capacity-building initiatives to support the ICT in education have also been intensified. For example, 100 ICT tutors in the thirty-eight teacher training colleges in the country have been trained in how to integrate technology in the teaching/learning process under Microsoft's Partners in Learning (PIL) Programme. Fourteen staff and personnel from the Curriculum Research and Development Division of the Ghana Education Service, and from the University of Cape Coast and the University of Education Winneba (Ghana's tertiary level teacher education institutions) have been trained in Digital Curriculum and Content Development. An ICT in Education programmes unit has also been established at the Ministry of Education which has trained over 550 ICT teachers in Senior High Schools and 50 school inspectors. Also, a total of 50 primary and Junior High School teachers have been trained in the use of ICTs in teaching and learning under a program called the UNESCO Net Program (MOE, 2008).

What has been notable about all of these developments is the emphasis on training to use the new technologies for educational purposes. But their success hinges very much on the extent to which, as pedagogical tools, they combine effectively with changes to the pedagogical culture of teachers which is essentially a perspective on learning as passive assimilation of knowledge. Much has been said about how ICTs can foster deep learning, such as supporting the development of problem-solving skills and skills in learning to learn. But this can only be achieved through a more interactive and dialogic relationship between teachers and students.

Once digital infrastructure and its accompanying logistics enter the Ghanaian or African classroom environment, much in the same way as happens in other regions, they present new challenges that relate to how teachers and students identities in the classroom should change to maximise the benefits in terms of productive learning outcomes. But more especially what needs changing are the existing attitudes and understandings about knowledge and how it is to be acquired. Whether or not teachers and students see these new technologies in the classroom as tools for creating new

ideas about knowledge reflecting their own experiences and perspectives of the world rather than simply as tools to transmit knowledge will depend on how ICT enhanced pedagogies have become well integrated into the school and teacher education curriculum. Although access to ICTs for educational purposes has dominated recent education policy initiatives in Ghana, not much has focused on the implications for a re-conceptualised teacher education curriculum built strongly on constructivist notions of learning which suggests «that people learn through the interaction between thought and experience: that both doing and thinking are essential for learning» (Stuart & al., 2008).

Deeply held knowledge transmission instructional practices and attitudes are not changed simply by introducing new technology into the classroom. There has to be fundamental changes to the way in which the curriculum defines how teaching and learning is to be transacted and knowledge treated. As Pryor and Ampiah (2003: 6) explain succinctly: «Beyond issues of access there is a second level of barriers to successful use of ICTs, concerned with attitudes and understandings rather than hardware and infrastructure. The existence of an environment conducive to new teaching methods and new relations between instructors and learners is a factor that must be taken into consideration. To take a few examples, if a wealth of new information reaches learners through the Internet, but then is processed through the traditional rote learning method and is taken as a body of facts that need to be memorised and recited on demand –not much has been gained. If art education resources in the form of the Web sites of international galleries and museums are made available to teachers and used in the classroom, the notion that some forms of art (to be found in certain physical and virtual sites) are superior to those forms which are not so available will be codified and reinforced. If the Encyclopaedia Britannica can be accessed through the Internet or CD-ROM, but such other sources of information as oral history or folktales cannot, the status of the former as a foundation for learning will be enhanced […] This is particularly important in the context of Africa in which the status and value of different bodies of knowledge are subject to serious political and cultural contestation».

Thus, it immediately becomes clear that it is how the content of the school curriculum is constituted and the ability of teachers and students to evaluate critically this content that will ultimately determine the extent to which the new communication technologies in education will add value to the learning experience. It raises the importance of training teachers in media and ICT-enhanced or enriched pedagogies with the view to transforming the uncritical teacher-centred culture of learning so prevalent in many African schools still (Pontefract and Hardman, 2005; Akyeampong & al., 2006; Tabulawa, 1997).

## 5. Understanding Transmission Culture in African Classrooms

The image of the classroom teacher in the sub-Sahara African context is largely one of an authoritarian instructional leader dispensing knowledge usually through a didactic instructional process with students as passive learners (Akyeampong & al.,

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2006). Although new information and communication tools in education offers the prospect of changing this culture, for this change to be lasting, the way in which teachers and students relate to information and knowledge ought to change as well. Anyone familiar with classroom discourse in many African schools will immediately have noticed the highly didactic format of lessons. One of the major sources of this instructional behaviour is how content in school textbooks is presented, placing much emphasis on acquisition of factual knowledge which students learn by rote and re-produce in examinations (Kanu, 1996). In many instances, primary teachers see their teaching responsibility as first and foremost imparting factual knowledge and understand their students' role as assimilating the knowledge they dispense. This view of schooling coupled with an examination culture that filters students towards paid jobs in the labour market has sustained pedagogical classroom practices founded on behaviourism in many African systems. The notion of «behaviourism» relates closely to a teacher-centred model of teaching where basically the teacher is the one who determines what to learn, tells students how to learn, placing emphasis on practice and repro-duction of knowledge as the test of achievement. Similarly, parents have come to judge successful schooling as the acquisition of knowledge dispensed by the teacher and the ability of students to regurgitate it when demanded in examinations (Tabulawa, 1997). It is within such a culture of teaching and learning that media and ICTs in education are entering, and unless the new technologies are used to provide contexts of learning where students for the most part engage in the «active construction of meaning» (Hopkins, 2002: 35), they are likely to slip into use as tools for the uncritical transfer of knowledge.

It is important to point out that technology is not new to education, and that constructivist learning does not come about simply by introducing media and ICTs into education. New technologies should be used as tools to create environments in which students learn by doing, receiving feedback, refining and building new understandings and knowledge. There is a difference between learning to use media and information communication tools and using them as tools for learning. This understanding is important, but is often confused by African governments reforming education. Much investment appears to go into the technology hardware and less to «software» reforms such as re-conceptualising curriculum materials and teacher education to support ICTs as a medium for learning to learn and the development of critical thinking. In effect, more emphasis should be placed on producing capacities for more interactive engagement of learners with each other and with teachers in classroom learning environment. That more interactive pedagogical methodology can be embedded in software and hardware design is an added-value of media and information literacy, however, it is important to stress that not all ICT products provide this opportunity, unless teachers and students are trained to engage with the knowledge and ideas they present in a critical and reflective way.

Research exploring African teachers' classroom roles and competencies in practice point to biographical and teacher education experiences as factors which shape their classroom identities (Lewin & Stuart, 2003; Wideen & al., 1998). By implication, the kind of exposure teachers get to new information and communication

technologies in teacher education is key to how they will handle ICTs in their classrooms. Identifying opportunities within the teacher training curriculum where ICT-based pedagogies are used to promote deeper understandings of teaching, learning and assessment is therefore an important step towards improving their use in classrooms. A review of teacher education curriculum for primary and secondary teacher education in Ghana indicates that teachers get a very superficial or limited introduction and that integration with the whole curriculum is particularly weak (Akyeampong, 2004; Ampiah & al., 2002). But, there is evidence that African teachers have the capacity to recognize opportunities in their classrooms where constructive learning is engaged which must raise the potential to utilize new technologies in the classroom to foster constructive approaches to learning. Akyeampong and colleagues (2006) studied fifty Ghanaian teachers' understanding of learning, teaching and assessment in INSET workshop settings and found that although they instinctively defined learning based on models consistent with knowledge transmission theories, probed further, these same teachers were able to visualize real contexts in their classrooms where children actually learnt through social interaction and interrogation of ideas. They noted that constructivist learning was recognizable to the teachers but had just not received strong validation through their teacher education experience. Media and ICT-enriched pedagogies offer the possibility to validate these experiences by using media tools such as videos and cd-roms to capture real classroom episodes in which teachers scaffold students learning and engage them in critical dialogue and interrogation of ideas. Because new information communication technologies (computers, cd-roms, videos and digital cameras) allow presentation of multiple images, different perspectives and understandings about knowledge, they could be used to develop suitable pedagogic practices to counter unproductive pedagogies currently in use many Ghanaian and African schools (Pryor & Ampiah, 2003).

The challenge comes from the fact that prescriptive instructional behaviour has developed deep roots in many African teachers' professional culture. Progressive teaching methods, such as «child-centred», reflective practice approaches seem to have had limited success in dislodging this culture (Tabulawa, 1997). The situation has not been helped by the way in which school textbooks and curriculum documents, syllabuses are written. Mostly they are written in a non-inquiring style and language which then validates the prescriptive and authoritarian structure of teaching and learning in many African classrooms. African teachers' access to reference materials apart from those supplied by the state can be very limited. Thus, education reforms have focused much investment on increasing textbook supply (Windham, 1988; Lockheed & Hanushek, 1988), and for good reason –textbooks to pupil ratios can be as low as one to eight (Fobih & al., 1999; NEIDA, 1992). Improving the situation continues to be a gigantic task for many education systems in Africa. For example, one estimate suggests that by 2000 Africa needed US$1390 million worth of educational materials mostly in print form, but was only able to import to the tune of US$625.7 (NEIDA, 1992). But the good news is that traditional values about knowledge and teacher role identity are not immune to the influence of globalization and the new technologies it introduces. Already, globalization is changing the way in which

societies view and represent themselves. New ICTs and other media tools and their use in educational contexts, therefore, present real opportunities to transform work and knowledge production within African systems of education, especially as more of these societies embrace global technologies and are able to use them to engage in critical dialogue about the value, meaning and application of knowledge in different social context while preserving their cultural identity.

Significant changes to the Ghanaian teacher education curriculum are however needed to create a much deeper sense of the value of media and ICT-enriched / enhanced pedagogies in classroom learning. Teacher education reformers need to explore how such pedagogies can be used to tackle aspects of the teacher education curriculum which are difficult to handle in the college training context and which require more creative handling.

## 6. Re-Conceptualising Teacher Education Curriculum for Effective Media and ICT Applications in Education

As a result of the positive impact of both 1987 and 1995 education reforms in Ghana, primary and junior secondary enrolment has outstripped trained teacher supply and increased the number of untrained teachers (see Table 2). To address this problem of untrained teachers in the teaching profession, attention has turned to Open and Distance Learning as a cost effective approach. Another attraction of this approach is that it allows these teachers to continue with teaching whilst receiving training through a mixture of distance learning materials and face to face contact with tutors.

|  | 2003/04 | 2004/05 | 2005/06 | 2006/07 | 2007/08 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Primary National | 73.9% | 72.4% | 70.8% | 62.1% | 59.4% |
| Primary Deprived | 55.3% | 53.2% | 55.9% | 42.8% | 37.2% |
| Junior High National | 84.2% | 83.5% | 85.5% | 77.2% | 76.4% |
| Junior High Deprived | 75.9% | 73.9% | 77.7% | 64.2% | 62.9% |

Table 2: Ghana: Percentage of Trained Teachers. Source: MOESS (2008).

In 2004, the Teacher Education Division of the Ministry of Education in Ghana with assistance from UK's Department for International Development (DFID) launched a programme that was to use ICTs to support the training of untrained teachers at a distance. Among its objectives was the use of mass media communications tools (radio and / or TV) to sensitise the target audience about the value of the programme. The programme was also going to explore how materials and information for the training could be made more widely available to the teachers by publishing them electronically. Teacher training colleges were also to be equipped with IT as well as video and audio capacity in resource pools that would allow them to record demonstration lessons and remote classroom practice. In addition, teachers and college tutors were going to be trained with skills to develop multimedia materials for teaching (MOEYS/GES, 2004). According to the program designers, these strategies would

ensure that the training engaged with the practical problems of teaching and narrowed the gap between theory and practice. For example, videos of remote classroom practice could provide real-life insights into teaching whilst audio discussions between 'experts' on elements of children's learning would focus attention on the importance of professional reasoning in teaching. This experiment was strong on ideas but short on practical achievement. The structure and content of the training followed much of what is already practiced in the traditional teacher training colleges. The programme is on-going and has trained 15,000 teachers so far, mainly using face to face interaction supplemented with distance learning text materials. One problem with the innovation is that the ideas behind them were cultivated externally and sold to local implementers. Both the external 'experts' and local implementers appear to have underestimated the practical and conceptual changes that were being demanded by the innovations and what this implied for wider systemic change in teacher education policy and practice.

Although there is no denying the potential of ICT to transform teacher education this way, implementation challenges are usually underestimated. The main challenges have to do with setup costs, human resource capacity, and, more importantly, effective delivery, which require significant modernization of training underpinned by constructivist principles of learning. In effect, this amounts to changing the view of learning to teach with its emphasis on uncritical transfer of knowledge to an emphasis on collaborative and inquiry-based approach to teacher learning. It is also about shifting the balance of responsibility for learning to teach to trainees. This could be achieved by using a wider range of resource materials including ICT applications to enrich the training process so that it achieves better outcomes in terms of knowledge about learning to teach and readiness to teach.

In the literature on media literacy and on education pedagogies, researchers in teacher education have called for greater exploration of the interface between educational theory and the realities of teaching, and asked for models of learning to teach that aim to deepen teachers' situational understanding of teaching so as to enhance their professional efficacy (Wideen & Grimmett, 1995). The introduction of modern communication tools such as videos, audio equipments and computers linked to the internet can indeed provide access to a very wide range of professional learning experiences that can then become material for exploring meanings and applications of theories of teaching and learning within particular classroom context. But it requires the forging of a more dialogic professional relationship between college tutors and untrained teachers who are not exactly novices but come with some professional and social capital. The introduction of ICTs in teacher education in Ghana has not addressed a fundamental question: What kind of teacher learning do media and ICTs encourage and how should the curriculum be designed and teacher educators trained to facilitate quality professional learning experiences using ICTs and other multi-media tools?

A key to the success in using an ICT-enhanced distance learning programme for untrained teachers is the effective organisation of the training to bridge the gap between theory and practice. This is dependent on infrastructural inputs as well as effective decentralised delivery, administration and support (Mattson, 2006). In the Ghanaian

case, the fact that distance teacher education programmes have continued to rely mostly on print material suggest that these challenges have largely been underestimated. Moving to a situation where electronic media feature prominently in the training process is evidently much more than a supply problem. It is also about how demand for the technology is created in terms of hinging relevant aspects of teacher learning and professional development on material that is generated using ICTs and other multi-media tools. Currently, the ongoing teacher education programme for untrained teachers in Ghana has relied mostly on print and face to face training both of which has tended to favour transmission patterns of training. The opportunities that ICTs could have offered to enrich the training process have basically not materialised simply because the ontological underpinnings of teacher education in Ghana have not changed to reflect at a deep level, experiential or practical understandings of professional knowledge in teaching and how to develop it in teachers.

In 2002, a major review report on education reforms in Ghana was produced by a Presidential committee and contained among other recommendations 12 on ICT-use in education and 5 strategies to implement them (GOG, 2002). Much of the emphasis was placed on increasing the supply of ICTs in education and training teachers, tutors and education officials to use the technology for teaching and learning. There was nothing in this very important policy document about the importance of re-configuring relevant areas of the school or teacher education curriculum to en-courage demand for its utilisation in classroom teaching and learning. Unfortunately, this is quite typical of many policies and programmes to introduce ICTs and other media communication tools in education systems in Africa.

## 7. Conclusion

What has been argued in this contribution, using Ghana as an example, is that, much of the recent effort to introduce ICTs in education have not been underpinned by fundamental changes to the teacher education curriculum content and delivery. This is key to how effective the new technologies will be in transforming classroom learning experiences across schools in Ghana and other African countries that have embarked on similar reforms. Reformers need to pause and think more carefully about what it is about a country's values and capacities that media and ICTs in education are expected to promote or change. It is after clarity on this has been achieved and wider systemic changes have been appropriately mapped out, that ICTs in education in Africa can promote wider social and economic development. Changes should also reflect the new professional learning identities and learning experiences that ICT and other media communication tools are meant to foster in the classroom. In Ghanaian education reforms this understanding has been lacking and similar situations probably exist in many education systems in Africa that are introducing ICTs and other media communication technologies into education.

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# 5. Media Literacy in MENA: Moving beyond the Vicious Cycle of Oxymora

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ABSTRACT

At a time when the region of MENA (Middle East & North Africa) is full of potential for capacity-building, social unrest, political agitation and poor civil liberties are still plaguing the population. The status of media education is low in MENA countries, preoccupied by many other vital issues, and yet the lack of it is detrimental to civic engagement… Current literacy practices in MENA countries have poor standards for critically assessing the media and research findings show a widening gap between the general public and the journalists, which further impairs media literacy. The analysis deals first with MENA countries and their «mal-media situation», using the metaphor of the cycle of oxymora to explain the various tensions and contradictions that characterize media literacy in the region. It then attempts to provide a political and media-related context to explain the current situation. It also uses research data to explore the challenges and opportunities to change the current dim picture in MENA, and concludes with several crucial implications for policy-making about media literacy in MENA.

KEY WORDS

Media literacy, civil liberties, collective fraud, journalism, freedom of expression, civic engagement, democracy, Arab identity.

## 1. Setting the Scene: The Mal-Media Situation in MENA

The current media literacy arena in different parts of the Middle East & North Africa (MENA) is marked with a weak economic base, high costs of production and diffusion, heavy political patronage, cultural fragmentation, centralized geographic concentration, and very low media credibility and low prestige of journalism. Besides, laws and regulations are not clearly stated with regard to media content and other professional values. Hence, it is rational to relate the internal socio-political and economic problems with the external cut-off from the world, which characterizes the MENA region. This situation is made even more complex by a combination of heavy consumerism, religious conservatism and military presence.

Most of the people are unimpressed and unmoved, and less concerned than ever about their governments' policy directions, as they are victims of a sort of media fatigue, due to the persistent feeling that double standards for information persist, that civic engagement is subject to too many hurdles and that rhetorical commitment to democracy and freedom often serves the personal priorities of the chosen few. The main challenge remains on how to educate the members of the public and empower them to ask for their civil rights and hold their governments responsible for their public obligations.

How can media literacy bring support to liberty and identity? How can the vertical hierarchy of news be changed into horizontal networks of communication? How can a better understanding of the region's media complexities be developed for civic engagement? To study the media culture in MENA, it is necessary to apply a comparative, interdisciplinary research strategy and to adopt a problem-oriented contextual perspective rather than a single media research focus. This analysis uses comparative research findings to consider the way audiences relate to the media in MENA, to try and explain the mal-media situation and the growing gap between journalists and their publics.

This analysis reflects upon the current media literacy situation as it functions like a vicious cycle of oxymora. The term oxymoron is a figure of speech, by which a locution produces an incongruous, seemingly self-contradictory effect. It is used here to describe a situation that reflects the contradictory status of media literacy in MENA[1]. This status is oxymoronic because, on the one hand, media pay lip-service to democracy and its obligations to people and, on the other hand, they are subject to the control of authoritarian regimes that create double standards among the people. Such status has lead to a persistent malaise in the relation between the media and the public, a «mal-media» situation, where the two parties feel there is little shared interest. This mal-media situation has caused a cohort of veteran political activists and media personnel to express regret and concern over the future of political and civil liberties in the region. At a time when MENA is full of potential for developing its human resources, the oppressive political systems, the lack of awareness and the absence of strategic vision have caused social unrest, political agitation and a setback of civil liberties, not to mention a severe brain drain.

The oxymoronic situation comes from the gap between the proposed reforms couched on paper in the recent years and the lack of implementation of such policies and goals in real life. In recent years, the MENA governments supported artificial reform that was not based on profound mechanisms or a concrete vision for sustainable restructuring. There are a number of problems related to the flagrant gap between the rhetoric of liberty and the reality of double-standard policies. This perpetuates the governments' lack of credibility and debilitates the will for profound social change.

Four main criticisms have been expressed by professionals and activists. The first is the marginal endorsement of freedom of expression and the press, while also ignoring other basic human needs. . The second is the superficial approach to freedom and democracy, which results in the marginalization of the interests of the majority to preserve the ruling minority's interests. The third problem is the governments' subjugation to major regional issues such as the invasion of Iraq, «Islamophobia» and the «resentment and tyranny» motivated by hatred for the Arab-Israeli conflict. And the fourth problem deals with the official simplistic analysis of multifaceted complexities that gave way to a perception of fear from the Green Danger, or the establishment of a Muslim State in Egypt and other MENA states (Saleh, 2006).

In such a context, media education and literacy come at the end of the priority list, because media are used as a platform for fabricated reality, for rationalizing the government's own iron-hand. To reinforce their politicizing solidarity, Arab governments have never allowed media to evaluate critically national domestic policies, or those of friendly governments. Media nearly never delve into national or local issues because these are the issues that most threaten their governments' authority and legitimacy.

Besides, media literacy is only possible if there is basic literacy. The average basic literacy rate in the overall region is 66%, which is relatively low, though the absolute number of adult illiterates fell from 64 million to around 58 million between 1990 and 2000-04 (Hammoud, 2005). The gender disparity is very high in this region, and women account for two-thirds of the illiteracy rate while the literacy rate is higher among young people than adults (Hammoud, 2005).

Such a bleak picture of reality is a logical result of the long years of the usual practice of the state «turning a blind eye» to finances and budgets related to human resources and education. It had an impact on media literacy because the state also turned a blind eye on media freedom and circulation claims, as long as it retained control over media content in its favour. This situation has brought about very poor media literacy rates, especially as no special policies addressed this issue. Media literacy also remains dependent on the state of the media, a situation which is not favourable to formal or informal media education.

Though a detailed characterization of the region goes beyond the scope of this analysis, though the political, cultural and economic settings of the regional fabric are very heterogeneous in nature and direction, MENA states share something in common regarding the state of their media: according to William Rugh, it is impossible to fit the media in the region with any of the «Four Theories of the Press»[2].

In MENA, ministers of information execute the agenda of their patron states in controlling the media and shaping their content, by enforcing harsh laws backed up by imprisonment and physical violence. The recent media explosion has complicated their former easy-to-do jobs, by widening their tasks, but they have adjusted to them. These tasks now include how to monitor the messages of the mushrooming new media scene, especially on internet, how to block the emerging activism of the expanding population of a predominantly poor, illiterate youth and how to stop the growing audience of radical Islamist groups in media, especially on TV.

Such increasing accessibility to new outlets, together with the general commercialization of all media, old and new, establishes a competition for audiences. It occurs in a highly saturated market which, combined to low media literacy rates, has driven investors to seek the lowest common denominator of heavy entertainment. But commercialization and privatization don't necessarily set media at a distance from government control: most media organizations are owned by and scripted under the watchful eye of their oppressive governments. Hence they are instruments of the government's agenda rather than authentic, independent vehicles for news.

Such perpetuation of government control across media has led to a sense of misinformation and suspicion among the public. It has perpetuated a general feeling of falsehood, that some have termed «collective fraud», which is a systematic and knowing suppression of unwelcome truths by a set of experts who either «shade» the truth or acquiesce to such shading[3]. This prevalent situation in many parts of MENA has resulted in media distortions, untruths, evasions, and biases collectively produced and maintained by willing journalistic lies. They contribute to the mal-media situation and to the public's feeling of being caught in a vicious cycle of oxymora.

Within this social fabric, communication and trust are reduced, hence force and violence are used to convince those who have doubts about what to believe in, especially when the public's dependence on the state news is paradoxically creating periodic «crises» of acute form. Such crises can take the form of a moral panic or an alarm over security; or they may be part of a longer-term, more diffused sense of crisis over Arab or Muslim identity.

An example of such manipulation of panic can be found in «The Economist» on September 18-24, 2004. The foreign publication describes how Egypt's leading newspaper, the government-owned daily «al-Ahram» on September 1, 2004, buried deep inside its pages the brutal massacre of twelve Nepalese kitchen workers by Iraqi guerrillas, who claimed to be doing God's work by executing Buddhist invaders. A day later, on its front page, «al-Ahram» featured rioters in Kathmandu, the Nepalese capital, attacking a mosque, without any cause-and-effect explanation. This asymmetric treatment of information is illustrative of the oxymoronic functioning of news, with unequal treatment of people and events, so that it is impossible for the public to come to an informed opinion. Patron states always justify their manipulation of media by referring to the need to prevent a return to the anarchy and violence of earlier times.

Considering the current «mal-media» situation in MENA states, media literacy becomes a contradiction in terms. The cycle of oxymora can be generally characterized

by a combination of oversimplification of terminology and concepts on the one hand, and lip-service rhetoric to freedom of expression and diffusion on the other hand. The vicious cycle encompasses the media's internal subjection to governments on the one hand, and their external separation from other regions of the world on the other hand, as many stereotypical negative images accuse MENA populations and governments of savageness and barbarism.

During the second half of the 20th Century, the MENA region aimed at unifying the general framework of its respective legislative processes, particularly through multilateral cooperation within the League of Arab States. In 1981, at the Second Conference of Arab Ministers of Justice in Sana'a, the capital of Yemen, the «Sana'a Strategy» unified the domestic legislation through a series of integrated codes, including civil law, civil law procedures, penal law, penal procedures, juvenile law, prison standards, combating information technology crime, and matters related to personal status, and judicial organization and regulation.

The League of Arab States also formed a committee to unify legal and judicial terms, structures, and processes to achieve a more integrated and harmonized legal system. Concurrently, to implement the recommendations of this committee, the League of Arab States also established the Arab Centre for Legal and Judicial Studies in Beirut, Lebanon.

It is also noteworthy that, during the session of the 2005 Arab Summit in Algiers (Algeria), the Pan-Arab Parliament in Damascus (Syria) was established to demonstrate that the consecrated Islamic Shari'a represents a solid foundation for Arab jurisprudence, while utilizing other legal systems employed in the region, such as the Latin system in Egypt and other North African states and the Anglo-American system in Sudan.

Egypt, the most populated Arab state and one of the most important geo-political countries in MENA, is a case in point: the Egyptian Constitution and international human rights instruments became part of Egyptian law upon ratification by virtue of article (151) of the 1981 Constitution. Article (47) of the Egyptian constitution also promises that «freedom of opinion shall be guaranteed». Furthermore, article (19) of the «International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights», to which Egypt became a party in 1982, guarantees the right to freedom of expression, including the «freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media». A new press law was introduced in 1996, stating that «journalists are independent and not under the authority of anyone». But this did not change the «mal-media» situation because other structural and functional problems were not addressed at the same time.

In practice, the Egyptian presidents have always manipulated the judiciary system since judicial appointments are a presidential prerogative. Judges were considered functionaries of the Ministry of Justice, which administered and financed the court system; it is headed by the president, himself the head of the Supreme Council of

Judicial Organs. But the rule of law relatively expanded in the post-Nasser era, and judges became a vigorous force defending the legal rights of citizens against the state.

The whole political life thus has been ridden with a series of oppressive laws such as the «Riotous Assembly Law 15» (1914), the «Meetings and Demonstrations Law 14» (1923), the «Emergency Law» (1958) and the «Police Organization Law 109» (1971) of the Egyptian Constitution. Many journalists and editors have since been interrogated, charged and sometimes sentenced by lower courts as these laws haven't been changed during the Nasser era (Kienle, 1998: 223).

Between 1993 and 1995, Egypt experienced a dark period. In 1993, the «Law to guarantee democracy» within the professional syndicates was enacted due to the increasing influence of the Islamist movement. This law requires a minimum voter turnout of 50% of the members in professional syndicate elections, or getting 33% in the second round. Voting results are voided and syndicates fall under the supervision of a group of judges appointed by the government if these electoral thresholds are not met. These thresholds give the regime greater powers to invalidate elections in the professional syndicates (Kienle, 1998: 228). In the same year, the Egyptian government amended the Journalist Syndicate Law, so as to manipulate the promotion of the journalists, or their transfer to another post in the same organization.

To that end, the law made the employees of the Ministry of Information, who far outnumber professional journalists, members of the journalists syndicate (Cassandra, 1995: 15-16). Two years later, the press law was passed to impose heavy sentences on publication crimes such as printing misleading information, false rumours, or defamation, in particular if these were directed against the state, its representatives, or its economic interests, or endangering public order. The penalties were increased to five years of imprisonment and payment of exceedingly high fines.

In May 1999, the Egyptian parliament passed a law encroaching upon the NGOs' freedom to organize and act, which banned private groups from working to influence government policy, or union activity. It gave the Ministry of Social Affairs power to disband boards of directors. NGOs must seek permission from the government before accepting foreign donations. The new law sets prison terms of up to two years for violations of vaguely formulated offences such as «threatening law, public morality, and order and national unity». Following a wave of protests by both Egyptian and international NGOs, the law was found unconstitutional by the «Constitutional Court» on procedural grounds and suspended. The country's older law on NGOs (Law 32 of 1964), which is seen as equally repressive, remains in force (Saleh, 2008).

The story of broadcasting is no different, as it has been always in the hands of the state as a political instrument from the start of the republic in 1952, through Law 13 of 1979 and Law 223 of 1989 that gives the Egyptian Radio & TV Union (ERTU) a complete monopoly over broadcasting. It is thus clear that the person running the ERTU that is regulated by the Ministry of Information and is headed by the minister of information, detains an enormous power over news and content (Saleh, 2003).

A further deterioration took place in February 2008 with the new alleged «code of ethics» monitoring the media performance of the satellite channels that was initiated

by Egypt and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This code of ethics can be used as a censorship document that may have a chilling effect on press freedom initiatives in Egypt. Another example is the arrest, for the second time, of Howida Tahah, a female journalist working for «Al-Jezzera» in Cairo, as a result of being accused of fraud and defamation.

Beyond the Egyptian case, all MENA states have similar laws and legislations restricting freedom of expression and diffusion. Yet the problem goes far beyond the law's content to deal with codes related to publishing cases and issuance of newspapers that can be found in «Imprints law, Penal Code, Journalism regulation law, State documents law, Civil servants law», banning army news and military decisions, parties law, and the intelligence law[4].

## 2. MENA and the Risk of «Psychic Numbing»

In this political context, what is perhaps most disturbing is the unfortunate rise of a soft-form of destructive self-censorship in media practice among journalists. For example, basic information such as demographic statistics is treated as if it were a state secret, and it is almost impossible to report on the inner working of governments. This is reinforced by the fact that most of the media personnel and journalists lack professional training. Knowledge is not valued, and there is a reckless use of power by senior bureaucrats.

It is thus very common to find that journalists and editors are frequently co-opted by officials and business interests, while others who expose their governments' corruption, or heavily criticize their regimes' practices are often subject to arbitrary arrests or threats or acts of violence. The fear of such retribution leads to poor government transparency, allows corruption to remain ingrained, and serves to prevent any meaningful discussion of issues that could lead to policy reform.

Faulty information endangers the whole of media literacy, where 24-hour news networks willingly spit out unsubstantiated hearsay and indulge the whims of camera-ready «expert» pundits / gossip-mongers who care little about truth and more about their own individual leanings. Real journalists must take care to guard their reputations by not participating in such programmes.

This mal-media situation of the region has stimulated a new spirit of cultural revolt that embraces both conservatives and liberals in the media profession. They object to poor media performance and deliberate ignorance of the public's interests. They feel that the hawkish climate of extremism reinforces a growing sense of alienation in the general population that is detrimental to progress. They think that it causes a real brain drain as professional journalists leave the country. It sets the whole region back, causing what Robert Jay Lifton called «Psychic Numbing»[5], a feeling of exclusion and disconnectedness that hits the journalists and the population alike.

Such government manoeuvres are symptomatic of «scare and confusion» (Shaheen, 2006). The regional media environment suffers from brutal enforcement

of censorship, and assiduous self-censorship on the one hand, while, on the other hand, the public view themselves as victims of two forms of media colonialism: one imposed by their own national governments and the second by the United States and its allies. Oppressed populations see their national and international oppressors working hand in hand to threaten their livelihood and to humiliate them. As a result of such a cycle of oxymora, the underground voices of dissent are channelled into and through radical Islamist movements. These movements are not favourable to media freedom either, though they try to use media to promote their cause.

As stated by Michael Vlahos: «The [radical Islamist] insurgency is an authentic Islamic renewal movement and central to change». Accordingly, «a successful Islamist revolution today is possibly the best way to diffuse 'radical' Islam –because of necessity it will do the defusing itself» (Vlahos, 2002: 26-28). In the media, Muslims put up a front of peaceful behaviour but, in private, some may consider having large number of casualties as a success for their cause. This twofold attitude in turn legitimizes the government's censorship enforcement.

An unprecedented spate of mass protests swept the region in 2006, which was perceived in some progressive and radical circles as a public awakening after long years of stagnation. It was also interpreted by the government as proof of the infiltration of the Muslim Brotherhood movement in different civil activities and syndicates. For example, Al-Zawaheri, the second-ranking man in al Qaeda, became radicalized while jailed in Egypt (Shahine, 2006).

In contrast with its legislation frozen in past practices and political scare, the media in the region are in the midst of a highly dynamic transition, fuelled by the emergence of low-cost, accessible satellite broadcast technology, including both the regionally located media and the diaspora media. They create the so-called «pan-Arab market».

This de facto media reality provides an ironic twist to the non-aligned pan-Arab political rhetoric of the fifties and sixties that was ushered in by Gamel Abdul Nasser, according to whom nationalized Egyptian media purported to speak for all Arabs. In the post-Nasser period, pan-Arab rhetoric was left to journals and newspapers located in London or Paris (off-shore media), where a Western-educated intelligentsia debated post-Marxist or post-modern constructs rather than pushing for individual rights and freedoms in their own country.

The cycle of oxymora then extends beyond the production values of news, the high-tech use of equipment, and controlled market competitiveness. It is related to the media continuous act of suppressing unwelcome truths via collective fraud and of pandering to the emotional and political sentiments of their audience in order to maximize their market share. And yet, such market share is not guaranteed and does not provide media independence. Despite all the attempts to commercialize media activity with advertising revenues, the shortfall is formidable. Media advertising revenue in the whole of the Arab world totals a mere $1.5 billion a year, while the annual operating costs, however, are around $16 billion, which means a $14.5 billion net

loss each year (United States Institute of Peace, 2005). This imbalance makes it difficult for commercial media to gain independence from the patron states, as they are the ones that compensate the loss.

Regarding the new online media in the region, a wider range of perspectives and messages exists than is available through conventional media. All players in the region attempt to use the on-line media with their unlimited possibilities and potential. Radical groups use the websites to address current and potential supporters with an objective to demoralize the enemy, by threatening attacks and by fostering feelings of guilt about the enemy's conduct and motives (Wiemann, 2004).

Thomas Hegghammer said that the Internet will play an increasingly important role for militants as they intensify their campaign in Saudi Arabia, which hosts several Muslim holy sites. «I think [Internet videos are] most certainly aimed at the Americans or the Westerners in general»[6]. However the internet is also subject to censorship once a site becomes popular or «noticed». A visit by the Egyptian state security forces to the site's office will always result with the toning down of the rhetoric.

Though it is difficult to assess the patron states' intentions, the fact remains that regional media tend to violate internationally recognized journalistic ethics and norms. In fact, the tension between the propriety of showing gruesome images on the one hand, and the protection of freedom of speech and the right to know on the other hand, will remain unresolved, unless effective media education policies for journalists and for the general public are put in place.

Regional audiences are put off by the current media market, as they feel deprived from any communication within their countries, and cannot but express their desperation at the lack of coverage of national problems or at the distorted coverage of terrorist proclamations and acts. The status of media literacy in MENA needs to be improved for confidence to be regained. This implies an assessment of the differences in expectations and possibilities, via research, in a pattern similar to other regions of the world, like Argentina or Korea, that have implemented reform based on scientific reports.


## 3. Evaluating the Challenges and Opportunities for Change

To explore the challenges and opportunities to change the current dim picture in MENA, and to evaluate the current constraints to see how they can be overcome, independent and adequate research results are necessary. These can be drawn using data collected by the «British Council in Cairo Project», «Media & Society», conducted by AC Nielson in 2005. This research provides a general picture of the perspectives, values and attitudes of professionals and how they can be compared to the perspectives, values and attitudes of the public. It was conducted within six countries of the MENA region (Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and the Palestine), and allows for comparative analysis.

The research is based on a qualitative approach of extensive interviews with a total of 1210 personal face-to-face interviews (200 interviews per country). Interviews

lasted for about 35-40 minutes; they were conducted with media professionals and with media university students from August 11 to September 22, 2005. All sample members resided in major cities in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan or Palestine. Each had a minimum regular (every other day) readership of one or more of the major daily Arabic language newspapers and watched TV regularly.

### 3.1. Demographics of the Sample Studied

| Media Professionals | Media Students | Unemployed People |
|---|---|---|
| Journalists, TV presenters, radio presenters. | Second, third or fourth year at faculties of Mass Communications. | Educated (having a high school or university degree). |
| Specialized in reporting social issues. | Males and females. | Currently unemployed. |
| Educated (having a university degree). | SEC. A/B and C1 | Age: 18-25 and 26-35 years old. |
| Males and females | | Males and females. |
| •26 years+ | | SEC. A/B and C1. |

### 3.2. Chart 1: Comparison between Media Agenda and Public Agenda

As Chart 1 indicates, according to the public agenda, unemployment ranks first
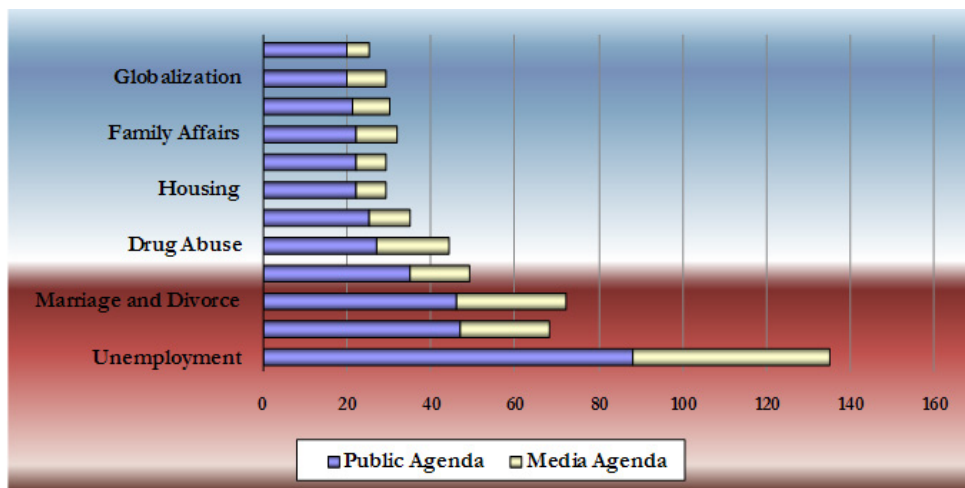


(88%) in the list of social issues currently faced, followed by poverty (47%) and the problems of marriage and divorce (46%). This is in contrast with the media agenda, which reveals a different list of problems. Quality of education (47%) seems to be the main social issue that the media focus on, while unemployment (9%) comes at the end of their list of priorities.

### 3.3. Chart 2: Cross Tabulation between the Main Variables of the Media Discourse
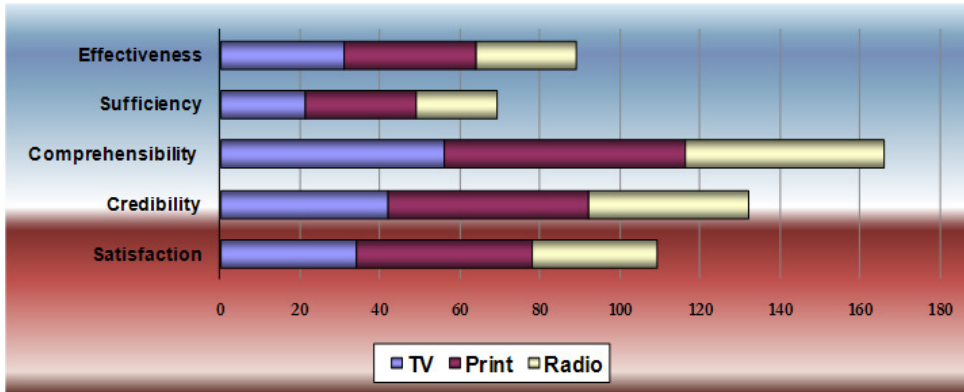
Reviewing chart 2, one finds some contrasting views in this cross tabulation. The highest levels of expectations –in different mass media– concern their comprehensibility with 60% in print, 56% in TV and 50% in radio. According to the statistical analysis, Arab audiences perceive print (33%) as more effective than TV and radio. They are more satisfied with its coverage (25%), and consider it is more comprehensive with its topics and issues (60%), more credible (50%) and more satisfactory (44%).

This result is in contradiction with the high rates of illiteracy that are widespread throughout the region, leaving only the elite to identify themselves with print with its multilateral approaches. It can be partly explained by the profile of the informants, that are predominantly urban and relatively literate.

### 3.4. Chart 3: Quality of Education in Schools
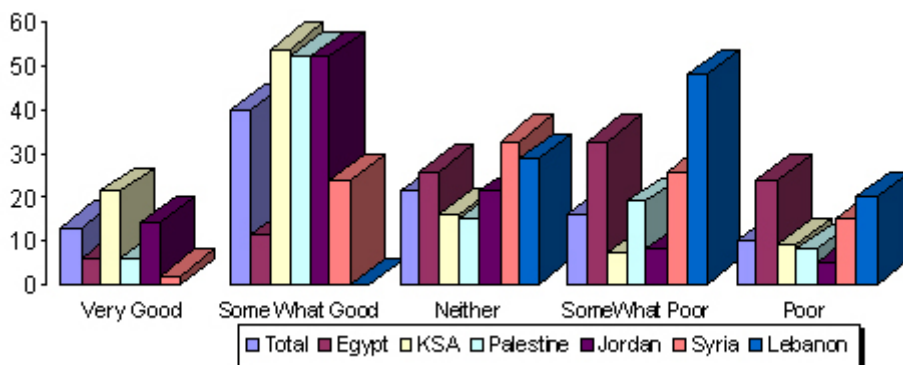


As chart 3 reveals, there is a great discrepancy between the countries under study due to many socio-political reasons, and sometimes due to the lack of awareness

AoC, Unesco, European commission, Comunicar

and points of comparison about the situation of education worldwide. When it comes to the total views of the countries, 40% of the sample believes that education is «somewhat good». However, going to individual country cases, the results are quite different and even contradictory. For example, in Egypt, 33% of the sample believes that school education is poor, while only 6% of the sample thinks it is very good.

This might be a direct result of a relatively open and free society. In contrast, Saudi Arabia (54%), the Palestine (52%) and Jordan (52%) view that school education is somewhat good, while (21%) in Saudi Arabia and (14%) in Jordan claim that school education is very good. Another point of analysis is the direction of good or bad for education as one finds that in Egypt it reaches 55% (33+24) and in Syria 41% (26+15), while in Saudi Arabia it bottoms at 16% (7+9) and in Jordan 13% (8+5). Such discrepant perceptions may come from a combined manipulation of media and education in the three countries considered. Such findings cannot be explained in reference to the reality of school education quality but rather to a sum of cultural variables, including the right to criticize a system that is controlled by governments in all of these countries.

### 3.5. Chart 4: Quality of Education in Universities
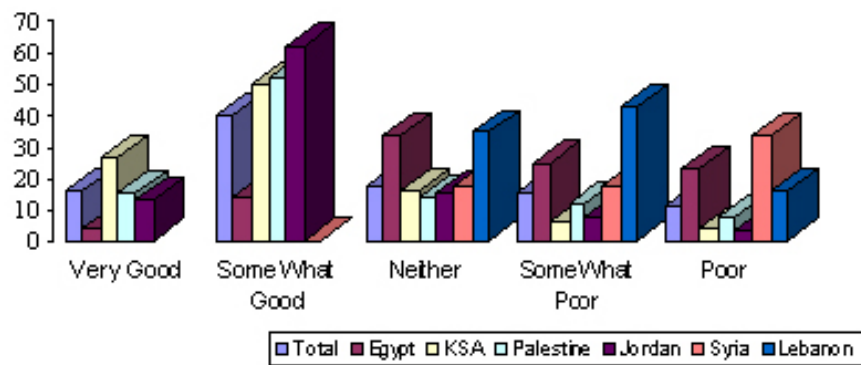


As chart 4 indicates, 40% of the total sample thinks that university education is somewhat good, while 11% of the sample thinks it is poor. In Egypt, the direction points towards poor education (25%), somewhat poor and (23%) poor. In Lebanon, the situation is reversed with 35% agreeing that university education is very good and 43% agreeing that it is somewhat good. Three countries favour the positive side of university education, including Saudi Arabia (50%), the Palestine (52%) and Jordan (62%). Surprisingly, these countries neither have the history nor the infrastructure for university education. The discrepancy here again can be explained by the difficulty in expressing one's views that the members of the sample might have felt, leading to self-denial or distortion of the true situation, not to mention the fact that the sample tends to reflect the views of an urban relatively literate population.

### 3.6. Chart 5: Activities regularly done by Media Professionals
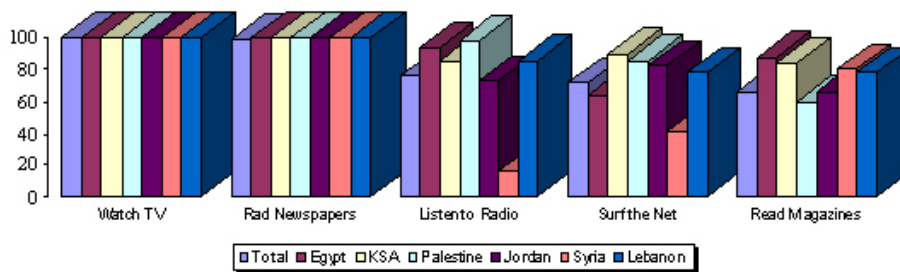
As for chart 5, there is a consensus among media professionals to watch TV and read the newspapers. However one has to remember that the sample population opinions cannot be generalized to the whole population in MENA. Besides, there is a chance that some of the answers are «prestige» answers: self-reports tend to increase consumption of media, as it is seen as a sign of modernity and professionalism. Such general results that give priority to listening to radio as a second option (73%) can be misleading because part of the sample population is composed of professionals who need to monitor all news outlets. Other sources show that in reality, only 3% of the general public still listens to radio (Saleh, 2008).

One of the major findings is the fact that Syria has the least percentage of listeners (16%), and the same scenario is repeated with surfing the net (42%) and reading the magazines (30%). Such situation could be explained in the light of the widespread poverty and the strict governmental control. But the findings are not justifiable in the Palestine with its continuous conflict with Israel and the weakness, if not the absence, of infrastructure.

According to the cross examination of media professionals and media students, there are three major challenges facing the region of MENA. First, there is a need for balancing the media playing field, by enabling the media to play a meaningful role in providing quality information to the public. This has to be supplied through less restrictive laws or practices, less government interference, and better protections for journalists who cover controversial issues. The second challenge is to empower the civil liberties' activist efforts, by changes in the law that will protect them from police encroachments. Third, there is the need to solve conflicts of interests, which requires the establishment of independent sound institutions and democratic governance through accountable and responsive laws and regulations.

### 4. Implications for Civic Engagement and Media Education

One of the crucial difficulties for media literacy in MENA is the fact that the region is still suffering from unlimited challenges. Some are related to the mediascape itself, others to basic social issues, like unemployment, education, health… However, it is getting more robust and functioning as a genie that is let out of the bottle, willing

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to explore and develop social change around Arab identity, and its potential openness to the rest of the world. But, liberating the genie out of the media bottle may prove difficult, as MENA governments may realize how little they know about the reality of the situation and as a result misjudge the extent of what needs to be done to solve the oxymoronic situation they have either inherited or helped to create. The current situation cannot be expected to end in the near future, unless actual implementation of reform takes place.

The ordinary citizens feel that there must be «something wrong» with them, as they are incapable of changing the situation. To make the confusion bigger, most MENA governments have a lot of wealth at their disposal, and use incomprehensible terminologies such as «Mushrooming Terrorists» to avoid or block any serious attempt of change. As a result of public fatigue, citizens in the region still prefer to pay high taxes, to have the government take care of social services and to enjoy subsidization in almost every aspect of life.

The views of the people on the streets of Cairo, Beirut, Amman, Riyadh, Gaza, and Damascus are very different and usually at the extreme opposite of the views of their remote leaders. In the research, they all agree that there is a serious discrepancy between official bilateral relations between states and governments on the one hand, and the views of the public on the other hand. The lack of civil liberties and the dichotomy of fear from secular state to religious state deepen the perceptions of threats of fundamentalism and terrorism. This situation results in an increase of public fatigue instead of civic engagement, as citizens are weary to deal with the lack of media governance and citizenship in a democratic context.

Radical voices use media effectively because they structure a discourse that is simple and easily transmitted in visuals, especially in the current context of media fatigue and of media failure as a social force since the public is still powerless to set the political agenda. Media distort reality and compete with each other to exaggerate this distortion, while bureaucrats and practitioners still refuse to change their familiar «safe» practices. This is a cultural impediment that needs time to be redefined and a political environment that develops the adequate reforms to restore trust (Saleh, 2006).

On the audience level, the public perceive themselves through a prism of individual and collective humiliation and resentment. Such a malaise tends to marginalize the «rule of law» as a political condition, as it has not worked to their benefit. To heal the region of this dilemma, public and elites alike need to admit that the «problem is within us». A deep-rooted introspection may never occur in the region, unless the public recognizes itself as a full-fledged civil society and a change-agent.

Undoubtedly, the development of media literacy in the region has a critical role to play in this transformation but it is not at all clear whether it has the wherewithal to transform itself, and much less the citizenry of its respective countries. The worrying point here comes from the endless split between the media agenda and the public agenda and the gap between publics and governments. An additional alarming point is the nature of change, as it might come through the turbulence of a revolution that

could be bloody and confusing, —bloody because so much is at stake for the regional actors, be it government, radical islamists or progressive activists, and confusing because nobody is quite sure who the actors really are and what interests they represent.

In a region where many people are still suspicious of change and resist innovation, even if it implies basic rights like political participation, the oxymoronic situation is magnified. This is not to say that agents of change don't exist: there are many progressive civil movements, like «Kefaya» (Enough) in Egypt, that are still fighting against governments' corruption. But the extreme, radical voices are also becoming louder and louder. As a result, the «third sector», or the marginal discontented public, is a world onto itself, largely detached from other sectors in society and loath to engage with them.

Another doxa in that regard is the absence, or at least the ineffectiveness, of laws allowing the practice of the right to expression and free opinion. This allows governments to close many newspapers, and put many journalists in prison, accused of insult and defamation for the most part. Many administrative obstacles are still at work. They stand in the way of those journalists who try to have access to official information. They hinder the practice of fair and independent journalism; they also lead some journalists into the «false information» trap, which makes them subject to imprisonment or sanctions such as fines.

The 2007 decision of the Cairo Misdemeanour Court to imprison the Editor-in-Chief of «Al Dostour» (Constitution), Ibrahim Essa, and the journalist Sahar Zaki, along with a citizen from Warak accused of insulting the Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak, stands out as a case in point of the cycle of oxymora. Beside many other lawsuits filed against «Al Fajr» (The Dawn) newspaper, headed by Adel Hamouda, another illustration is the case of the executive editor-in-chief of «Sout Al Omma» (Voice of the Nation), Wael Al-Ibrashy. He was referred to the criminal court in the judges' crisis, when they felt used and aggrieved by widespread electoral fraud during the first presidential elections. Because of legal irregularities, such as unfair trials of opposition figures, attacks on members of the judiciary also escalated[7].

## 5. Key Elements for Building up Civic Engagement, Identity and Media Literacy

For almost a decade now, MENA has been launching new media policies and expanding its cultural agenda to meet the challenges of deregulation and greater global competition. One aim has been to focus on the perspectives offered by the digitalization of media, to transform all aspects of culture, such as education, work, etc. But it is not just a question of changing the media policy and the cultural policy or the technological and economic aspects, it is also a question of relating to the much bigger issue of the regional integration and gradual fragmentation of national cultures and identities in the light of globalization. Indeed, MENA is going through a transitional change from a traditional national mass society to a marginal global embedded-ness of mass media into the «interactive society». In this new context, there is a decline or transformation of traditional organizations and institutions and the rise of a more

complex structure of sub-networks for the individual, based on other criteria than national identity.

**170** Culture, media, communication and information technologies, however, are part of the strongest growth sectors (culture, education, entertainment, information) of the new economy of the information society. The development of MENA's media and cultural policy is placed between two tendencies: the liberalization and homogenization of a regional market for media (that allow more free flow of products and players, also enabling regional conglomerates to develop into power-players on a global level) together with the strong tradition for public support and protection of a cultural art tradition and a public service culture, that has so far been a national obligation trying to create synergies and networks in production and distribution of regional media products and know how.

The only way to overcome the systematic distortion of communication causing cross-cultural violence is to use media and culture to (re) build the fundamental link of trust and solidarity between people, which is the goal behind media literacy, to build trust and fight fear and oppression.

Moving from terror to tolerance is the first step to get various people and cultures on the same stage at the same time so as to share a common field of interaction. However, tolerance has limits, depending on the stronger party in control position and how this stronger party decides on what alien practices will be tolerated in what Derrida describes «absolute respect» for the other (Balfour, 2007).

To overcome the current vicious cycle of oxymora in MENA and to achieve the move from terror to tolerance, there are five key elements to take into account and to address:

• The first key element is to acknowledge that efforts to reform laws stand a better chance when backed by broad sectors of society, even in dysfunctional political systems that aggregate power among a small elite. Legal changes may be insufficient, if not accompanied by efforts to change societal perceptions.

• The second coincides with the need to reconsider the current social contract between the governments and the publics, as a must. A situation with overwhelmingly negative stereotypes and attitudes is predominant due to the difficult implementation of basic human rights for people in the region. In addition, broad societal biases exist against women holding certain leadership positions in government and society and prevent this valuable section of the population to participate fully in civic engagement.

• The third is the necessity of changing the power flow direction of communication between the governments and the publics. Old notions of rule by control from above are still prevailing, instead of empowering consensus and democratic debate in which all members of society are engaged as equals, providing input from the bottom up.

• The fourth is related to implementing laws and reforms as a condition to expand rights, though the publics are very sceptical about the governments' ability to implement new laws and reforms. As many elite members perceive it, cheap cosmetic moves with no real stamina or will are not satisfactory for engagement.

• The fifth involves the engagement of the public in the process, by raising public awareness about their rights, especially within those with lower levels of education and those living in rural areas, generally less aware of their rights. Freedom in MENA still has negative connotations of licentiousness and degradation of moral values.

In the end, there should be a regional call for a serious charter to make the public airwaves truly public, and not just a state domain. There should also be a call to rewrite the corporate responsibility to contribute to the wellbeing of society and patron states should make it their own vision to promote the future of the region.

Without doubt, political reform toward classical liberal values is a step to engage with adequate media literacy and to foster good governance. Media literacy, among journalists and the general public alike, would also be a way of preserving the identity of the region in a non-menacing way. It would be a way of fighting stereotypes against Arabs amongst Arabs and a way of bringing modernity and openness while preserving a progressive Arab-identity. To a greater extent than the MENA people would like to acknowledge, most of the work toward that end is for the people in the region to do themselves, by establishing a new set of institutions to grapple with this reality, and new training methods to engage people in national self-interest and identity-construction.

Terms like «political unrest», «ancient history / religion», «treatment of women / foreigners», «Muslim / Islam» and «oil» are all related to the degree media literacy could help people cope with stereotypes, preconceptions and general lack of understanding. They could be set in the worldwide context of geopolitics and the economy of international media flows. Media literacy could thus be a long-term strategy to help people re-evaluate their mal-media situation. It could be of use for leaders and decision-makers to implement change without turmoil, with a progressive understanding of peace and human rights as a way of reclaiming Arab identity and pride.

The concept of regionalism itself is a changing concept that the media can help expand, within MENA territories, in the individual states, between regions in states, and between countries. At the same time, MENA is part of a changing global scene, a scene which individuals to a large degree experience through media, media that are themselves influenced by the global flow of money and culture. The development of media is part of the modernization and globalization of society.

MENA could thus build up civic engagement if it encompasses the current impact of all the mediated process of compressing time and space, and its effects on our new concepts of risk, tradition, family and democracy. Media literacy in the MENA region can potentially loosen the ties between the individual and the traditions and institutions that used to give solidity and predictability to the individual development. However, the move from traditional dependency to a more wide-ranging form of individual freedom can be perceived as more demanding and insecure than older forms of tradition. A more reflexive form of modernity and individual identity is a vital part of the new horizontal networking and the process of building up engagement.

The challenges facing the transformation of media literacy from a governmental propaganda tool into collective innumerable local alternative movements, struggling collectively to develop strategies and philosophies, needs to encompass different affinity groups and transversal solidarities. Only so can media literacy build up engagement, and provide peaceful solutions to the conflict between a cosmopolitan worldview and fundamentalism in any shape and form. Fundamentalism is tied to the fanatic defence of traditions that bind the individual to national or religious paradigms and stories, whereas cosmopolitanism supports transnational globalization, expanding ideas of human rights and equality across national and regional borders and mental structures (Giddens, 1999).

The media in MENA, both traditional and new interactive media, can play an important role in this development towards a more and more technologically integrated media culture operating to a still larger degree beyond the former geographical borders and yet bolstering regional identity and pride. Arabs and Muslims need to develop their own cultural responses to globalization either through the introduction of a re-energized religion, or through overcoming the current impediments of real cross cultural dialogue, by engaging their counterparts in non-MENA regions. In this context, universalism could be realized, by opening up to the world, enriching instead of diluting or even erasing local identities. Hence, cultural revival built on firmly rooted infrastructure could unify instead of divide humanity (Levin, 2005: 204).

The media as a whole, seen in a larger historical perspective, can contribute to such cultural identity formation, as evidence exists worldwide of resilient local, regional, and ethnic identities. These identities are dynamic, adapting to modern changes in patterns of work, family structure, urban living and income distribution. In such a context, media at one and the same time, act as sources of symbols and ideas as well as important sites of debate, a role that complements their absorption of peoples' times and resources.

## Notes

[1] «Oxymoron» is a rhetorical figure, in which incongruous or contradictory terms are combined, as in «a deafening silence» and «a mournful optimist» (Houghton, 2006).

[2] William Rugh (2004) describes four situations. Mobilization: Syria, Libya, Sudan and Iraq before 2003. Each experienced colonization and media developed political unrest, and their regimes directly control media and use legal means to attain their goals. Loyalism: KSA, Qatar, UAE, Bahrain, Oman & Palestine, experienced linear development along the traditional lines of government ownership, ups and downs of freedom, and marginal role of political parties. Media are owned by the government and accordingly, they play a crucial role. Transition: Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia, Algeria and Iraq after 2003, where media are controlled by the government, and are manipulation through legal means, resulting with self-censorship. Diversity: Less authoritarian, where government influence over media is limited with strong advocacy of freedom of expression as the case of Kuwait, Yemen, Lebanon, and Morocco.

[3] «Collective fraud» reflects intellectual dishonesty among scientists and scholars; it is, of course, nothing new. But scientific integrity has given little attention to the ways in which collectivities of scientists, each knowingly shaving or shading the truth in small but similar ways, have perpetuated frauds on the scientific community and the public at large. This urges the need to explore the social process by which many otherwise honest scholars facilitate, or feel compelled to endorse, a scientific lie (Gottfredson, 1994).

[4] Cherif Bassiouni, Professor of Law and President, International Human Rights Law Institute, DePaul University; President, International Institute of Higher Studies in Criminal Sciences, Siracusa, Italy; Honorary President, International Association of Penal Law, Paris, France (Bassiouni, 2007).

[5] «Psychic numbing», according to the psychiatrist Robert Jay Lifton, builds on well-known defence mechanisms, such as repression, denial, and projection, to create a feeling of exclusion and disconnectedness. Aided by the surfeit of stimuli from television culture and media-manipulated images, people may tune out of those realities and possibilities that threaten their own sense of connection to the world (Shor, 2002).

[6] The Internet is becoming an increasingly vital medium for Islamic militants. Whether through websites featuring videos of Americans being executed or texts inspiring attacks, the Internet has become a key tool for propaganda and for the exchange of ideas among militants. Thomas H. (2006) in an article on «terrorism.net» (June 16, 2004) cited by Jeffrey Donovan of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty.

[7] The judges' crisis was a result of their attempts to distance themselves from various irregularities, by taking their case to the streets. Egypt's judges fought for their independence, their honour and public image. The question remains related to the implications of such crisis, whether it set the judges against each other, or whether it set the entire judiciary against the executive. One possible reason for the current crisis is that Law 46 of 1972 gives the Minister of justice extensive powers in running the judiciary. The minister has the right to move judges from one post to another and to discipline them. This kind of power should remain in the hands of the Higher Judiciary Council, as is the case in other countries (Amin, 2006).

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# Media Education Actors Outside the Educational Framework: Toward Civic Agency

# 1. When Media Education is State Policy

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ABSTRACT

One of the specific challenges faced by media education in Latin America is to narrow the divide and promote more equitable, fairer access to cultural and technological commodities among young people from the poorest families. Although the obstacles are more than a few and the challenges are by no means negligible, the first step toward facing them is to insert media education as a public policy, as State policy. Fortunately, we have always had teachers who have used the media and taught others to analyze, interpret and use them creatively. The idea, when media education becomes part of public policy, is to move beyond individual initiatives and turn these private efforts into a State commitment. This is the only way to overcome the huge obstacles and materialize the major challenges posed by media education in the 21$^{st}$ century.

KEY WORDS

Commitment, democracy, participation, public policy, multimedia generation, youth identity, school, folk culture, social inclusion.

## 1. A Commitment to Democracy

In 1982, during the Malvinas War between Argentina and the United Kingdom, the media in Buenos Aires, strictly controlled by the military government, fanned feelings of triumphant victory. «Argentineans, to victory» was the central motto in all television campaigns during the war. This motto replaced the previous «We Argentineans have rights and are humane» that had been emblazoned on screens since 1976 by initiative of the same dictatorship to neutralize rumours of the thousands of disappearances that began to spread abroad.

During the Malvinas War, the media campaign hinged upon three main themes: confidence in winning, rejection of all things English, and nationalistic sentiments. Throughout the conflict, TV broadcast only British casualties, while calling for leaving Shakespeare out of schools and the Beatles out of record shops. After 60 days of intensive battle, the same media announced that Argentina had lost the war.

Thousands of kilometres from the city of Buenos Aires, the British media were also covering the Malvinas War. In a matter of days, they had to persuade many people that it was worth giving their lives (or for others to give theirs) for the future of a few islands that they had only first heard of a few weeks before. Tremendous ideological work was required to mould public opinion and persuade them of the righteousness of the Government's cause (Masterman, 1993).

The experience of the Malvinas War, in both a democratic country and a dictatorship, confirms the need to develop critical understanding of the media that must unquestionably start in elementary school.

The media construct, expand and shrink the public domain. They influence the agenda of what society discusses. They add some topics and avoid or ignore others. However, even if a new issue can be put onto society's agenda, this does not mean that public space is expanded. Circulation of information can also contribute to de-politicizing the social and de-socializing the political (Landi, 1994).

Information for information's sake –in fact– is not enough. We value information that is inserted within political culture (in which the information has meaning) to inform participation and expansion of the public arena, without restrictions or privatizations. We are talking about media education that prepares people to avoid any curtailing of the public arena.

The possibility of participating is on the side of whoever can make use of media messages, because that person can analyze, interpret and evaluate them and because that person knows how to set strategies and make decisions on that basis. Media education must contribute to educating students' public awareness, so they learn to avoid any encroachment on their social participation and to use all possible channels to take part in decision-making on issues affecting their daily lives.

Teaching about the media during the Malvinas War (of course, unthinkable in Argentina's dictatorial context at the time) would have disclosed the scheming media manipulation that the entire society bewailed 60 days later.

Media education –especially in fledgling democracies such as in Latin America, but also in those with long-standing democratic traditions– is education for citizenship. And that is precisely why it would never have survived under an authoritarian regime. For that very reason, this education cannot be left out of a democratic society, either. Understanding how the media represent reality and tell us what is going on can put people in a better position to participate, act and make decisions.

Media education involves the world and its portrayals, the way the media construct meanings and legitimize discourses. Media education entices us to analyze the way that we as audiences re-signify them. Media education questions us constantly about the way we assign meaning to the world and the way the media assign meaning to it for us (Ferguson, 1994). Only by asking ourselves about the way the media produce meanings can we understand the way they influence our perceptions of reality and the way we can transform it.

In our commitment to democracy and expansion of the public arena, media education is justified, whether in wartime, under an authoritarian regime, or in any society's democratic life.

## 2. The Multimedia Generation

There is another reason underlying the need to implement media education worldwide: the new cultural and technological universe where children and young people live and the need for schooling to acknowledge responsibly this dynamic communicational environment.

Youth under 18 are the first generation who have been surrounded from birth by an extremely diversified media universe: radio (AM and FM), TV channels (broadcast and cable), video games, DVD, MP3, cell phones, I-Pods, Internet…

Any distinction between new and traditional media is meaningless for today's young people. It is the adults who notice these technological changes, the new lessons to be learned and the new social uses for the media they must undertake.

By contrast, young people have learned to use a TV remote control, a CD player and a PC all at once. Their talk with friends shifts smoothly from music on an FM station, to a TV series and a new software download from Internet (Morduchowicz, 2008).

In fact, in Latin America and worldwide, there are still major media divides between young people from poor backgrounds and from the middle-class. Teens from poorer families have much more restricted access to cultural and technological commodities than their wealthier peers. Anyway, cultural consumption is an essential part of youth identity for them all. The media and information technologies have become a place for today's youth –sometimes the only place– that speaks about them and to them.

Youth used to become emancipated by work, study and marriage. Now many prefer to break free through connectivity and consumption. These new ways to leave

home dovetail with the old ways, beckoning, from adolescence (age 12 and up), toward a horizon far from their parents (García-Canclini, 2006).

Today's children and teenagers, watching television, listening to music on their Walkman, and radio over Internet, play a video game, surf around cyber-space, and chat for hours with their friends, soaring through a dynamic universe of fragmentation, a mosaic world of unceasing stimuli, immediate and simultaneous (Ferrés, 2000).

Adolescents belong to a generation also called the «Multimedia Generation», not only because of the assortment of media at their disposal, but because they use them all at once (Morduchowicz, 2008).

While watching television, teens listen to music, surf the Web, talk on the telephone and do their homework. They do not concentrate on a single medium. A 2006 survey among Argentine youth, ages 11 to 17, by the Ministry of Education, showed only 20% of them using media one at a time. Time is shared among the media, never just with one –a feature defining this generation.

With Gütenberg, in the 15$^{th}$ century, we say that society moved from oral to written culture. In the 20$^{th}$ century, we took the giant step from the culture of words to images. Now, in the 21$^{st}$ century, we have taken the next step, from linear reading to simultaneous perception.

Today's adolescents live a different cultural experience from their elders, with new ways of perceiving, feeling, listening and seeing. These dimensions must not be skipped over in media education.

## 3. The Role of Schooling

Faced with this new cultural reality, there is no point in becoming alarmed or reacting defensively. What society and especially school must do is analyze the way to get closer to youth culture (or not).

If we agree that young people also build their cultural capital outside the classroom, and even in relatively autonomous settings, school can no longer be viewed as the only legitimate place to convey pre-established symbolic baggage (García-Canclini, 2006).

School, however, does not always seem to be catching on. So the result is that school culture remains out of touch with youth culture. Youth go around in a universe governed by different parameters from those legitimized by school culture.

From its beginnings, school –born with the printing press– has always been most closely linked to print culture. Schools have lived in a world ruled by the logic of books, linearity and sequential order.

School –since then and to this day– continues along the pathway of writing, words and textbooks. And schools have often ignored the cultures that have begun emerging and coexisting with them outside the classroom, movies; television and new

technologies. This traditional concept of schools has widened the divide between the culture from which students learn and the culture from which teachers give class. In general terms, schools as institutions are standing aside as socio-cultural processes configure youth identities and schools continue thinking about «youth» as the ideal young person portrayed in textbooks, who must progress step by step and learn certain behaviours (Martín Barbero, 2002).

School dodges its confrontation with the audiovisual culture by reducing it to its moral effects, resorting to a discourse that laments the way some media –especially television and video games– soak up children's free time, manipulate their naivety and idealism, shoot them full of superficiality and complacency, and make them reluctant to undertake any serious task. Obsessed with the evil power of the media, educators ultimately lose sight of the complexity of young people's world (Martín Barbero, 2003).

If youth identities are defined not only by the books they read but by the TV programmes they watch, the multimedia texts they surf, the songs they stream, the movies they choose and the comics they prefer, then schools must approach these consumer commodities, and acknowledge that adolescents use different languages and write in different ways.

Popular culture is one of the few spaces that youth see as belonging to them, feeling that it speaks to them and about them. Pop culture helps them understand who they are, how the society they live in works, and how they are defined socially.

The challenge for today's schools is to recognize that knowledge is spread and circulates in new ways. Two changes have been keys to this process: «de-centering» and «de-timing» (Martín-Barbero, 2003):

• De-centering means that knowledge is no longer the exclusive domain of books and schools, but is also beginning to circulate through other spheres, such as the media.

• De-timing means that knowledge has also slipped free of the timeframes socially legitimized for distributing and acquiring knowledge. Time for learning has until now been circumscribed within an age range. Now, although school-age has not gone away, its existence is shifting. What we learn at school must fit in with learning that does not come from a given place, learning freed of the boundaries marked by age, becoming ongoing. This learning transcends the schoolroom, lives at all times and spreads lifelong.

The great challenge for today's educational system is to train children and youth to access and use the multiple ways of writing and thinking that lead to the decisions affecting them at work, at home, in politics and economics.

Living in a multicultural society not only means different ethnic groups and traditions, but the coexistence of different languages, oral, textual, audiovisual and hypertextual culture (Martín-Barbero, 2002). School must become the center where these cultures flow together, to know, analyze, explore and use them creatively.

## 4. Why Incorporate Media Education?

There are more than a few reasons to integrate this teaching into schooling. The following ones may be the most important reasons:

• There is a great flood of information that children receive outside school, much of it from the media. Schools should be where all this information flows together, albeit often contradictory and confusing at times for students.

• The media and technologies grant access to contexts and realities that we would otherwise miss out on. The media, and more recently Internet, propose new concepts of time and space, which schools must teach kids to understand.

• The media and technologies construct a picture of the world on the basis of which each of us builds our own. It is important for schools to teach students to critically analyze the way media represent reality, so students are better prepared to build their own images, representations and opinions.

• For many children and young people, pop culture gives them meaning to construct their identity. They learn to talk about themselves in relation to others. If school is to get closer to them, to narrow the gap between school and youth culture, it must integrate pop culture, which wields such weight in constructing their identity.

• In Latin American societies, access to the media and technologies is quite uneven and the digital divide is very deep. Schools can (and must) achieve a better distribution of information and knowledge, above all, among those with the least access to them.

• Information for information's sake is not enough. Only schools can turn information into knowledge. Teaching to read, interpret, analyze, evaluate messages broadcast by the media is a task that, for many students, only the educational system can handle.

• We live in a multicultural society, because we live alongside various languages and cultures. Young people must learn to read a hard-copy text (books, newspapers, magazines) but also to make use of the multiple languages circulating socially: visual, audiovisual and hypertext language.

• Media education, finally, reinforces students' social and civic education. Teaching them how to read (in the broadest sense of «reading») the media and technologies in school, and reflecting critically will help educate well-informed students, sensitive to social issues, critical of the information and messages they receive, self-reliant in the decisions they make in a participatory manner.

## 5. State Policy, With Multiple Stakeholders

With these principles and foundational tenets, the Argentine Ministry of Education has decided to insert this area as public policy and create the «School and Media» Programme. This Programme was initially created in the Ministry of Education for the City of Buenos Aires (which has its own jurisdiction) in 1984. The decision was taken precisely because democracy had been regained in 1983 and children, who had lived their whole lives under a rigid military dictatorship, had to be taught the meaning of freedom of speech, the free press and the right to information.

In 2000, the «School and Media» Programme –solidly inserted into schools in Buenos Aires– was launched nationwide. Almost twenty years since the return of democracy, we could set specific goals, without forgetting, of course, that strengthening democracy would always remain the framework for all our initiatives. The following

goals were proposed for the «School and Media» Programme by the Argentine Ministry of Education:

- Promote media education nationwide, in all the country's primary and secondary schools.

- Strengthen students' cultural capital, especially those from the economically least-privileged households.

- Improve the way children and youth are portrayed in the media.

- Make students visible in different ways, helping them make their voices heard.

- Sensitize parents to the topic and offer them tools to orient children in their relationship with the media.

To meet these goals, the Programme is coordinated nationally and in each of the country's 24 provinces. The structure of «School and Media» has another two fundamental stakeholders.

The first stakeholder is made of the media associations, the groups gathering television stations, newspapers, movie theatres and magazines nationwide. We are convinced that it will be hard to promote media education without the media. It will be impossible to transform the way youth are portrayed in the media without the media. It will be difficult to give youth a new image without the media. Precisely for this reason, Argentina's Ministry of Education is working jointly and systematically with all media associations to launch its different initiatives and actions for schools and the community at large.

The second important stakeholder in this Programme is private companies. Some of the companies accompanying the different initiatives belong to the world of the media and communications (Telecom, Microsoft). Others are in unrelated areas (Coca Cola, Adidas, etc.). However, they all share a single characteristic: they advertise in the media and therefore are interested not only in improving the quality of contents, but in promoting critical watchers and readers among the new generations.

There were two reasons to incorporate companies in this Programme. First, most of the proposals and actions promoted require a special, often high budget. Involving companies makes it possible to produce TV programmes, short movies, radio shows, and workbooks for parents and magazines for students –and all that at no cost to the government and no charge to the community. However, the budget is not the only reason for this decision.

Incorporating private companies into this Programme follows the need to include and commit these companies to media education. Most of these companies –as previously mentioned– advertise on the television, radio, magazines, movies and newspapers. They create advertising campaigns to promote their products, often targeting children and adolescents. So, involving companies in a joint project with the national Ministry of Education and maintaining an ongoing dialogue about how young people are portrayed in the media is important in its own right, making them stakeholders in pursuing these projects. The companies themselves are ready to sponsor these proposals, which also entail significant media visibility.

One last observation about the way the Ministry of Education contacts and commits the media asssociations and private companies. Contact is made by the «School and Media» Programme that looks first for the media associations most likely to be natural «partners» for these actions. We are sure that media education must engage the media themselves in systematic debates about these issues.

Once the associations are in, the «School and Media» Director contacts each company, one by one, to invite them to take part in some of the different initiatives being promoted. As of 2008, over 15 top companies (national and multinational) have sponsored the media projects. Finally, it is important to emphasize that no company or media association intervenes in the goals, contents or design of the initiatives, which are exclusively prepared under Ministry of Education responsibility.

## 6. The Initiatives: From Sensitization to Action

The proposals promoted by the «School and Media» Programme can be grouped by the goals they pursue:

- Teacher training actions: courses, on-site workshops and training materials production (hard-copy and on-line).

- Special initiatives for schools: events, contests and festivals promoting analysis and use of the media.

- Actions especially for students: proposals geared toward students and involving them.

- Projects to sensitize the community: actions for families to help them understand the relationship between children and media.

- «School, camera… action» Festival. Every year, since 2000, secondary-school students (ages 13 to 15) are invited to write a story about a topic. A panel of well-known script-writers and movie producers selects three stories to produce as short films. A prestigious Argentine movie director shoots the short films, and the adolescents take part in the production. The three short films are shown for three weeks in every movie theatre in Argentina, before the regular movie. This way, thousands of movie-goers can see short films conceived and written by public-school students. This enables the youngsters to tell their own stories, with their own voice and their own opinions. The Festival is sponsored by the Argentine Association of Cinema and the Federation of Motion Picture Producers. Private companies finance the film production.

- «Journalists for a day» Contest. Every year —since 1997 in Buenos Aires and since 2000 nationwide— students about to finish high-school (ages 16 and 17) write up a journalistic investigative article on a topic of their choice. Editors of newspapers from all over the country select the articles they want to publish. One Sunday in November, every newspaper in Argentina devotes one or two pages to the students' investigations. They are printed just as they wrote them, with the same sources, un-changed. This way, millions of newspaper readers all over the country get to read investigative articles conceived and written by public-school students. This is another way to give youth a different kind of visibility and, above all, to challenge the portrayals of youth that newspapers normally bandy about. It is one thing for adults to write

about teen pregnancy, but quite another when the youth themselves write it. «Journalists for a day» is sponsored by the Newspaper Association.

• «First High School Magazine». Since 2008, «School and Media» has published «RE», using a prefix that many teenagers use here to stress an idea: re cool, re good, etc. It is also the first syllable of «REvista REsumen» (Summary Magazine), which is the essential idea: a media summary. This is the first magazine, distributed at no charge, for high-school students nearing graduation. The monthly magazine gathers news, articles and interviews that have come out in Argentine newspapers and magazines during the preceding month. Sponsored by the Associations of Magazines and Newspapers, each article is reproduced verbatim, citing the source, author and Website that first published it. This not only promotes reading, but teenagers nationwide discover newspapers and magazines they had been unaware of before. The monthly, 24-page color magazine is sponsored by different private companies so copies can circulate free of charge among over 40,000 students.

• «TV in the Family». This is a workbook for parents, so they can orient their children's TV watching. The workbook has twenty questions expressing adults' common concerns about the relationship between children and television. The answers also include advice and recommendations. This workbook –published once in 2006 and again («TV in the Family 2») in 2007– is distributed as a Sunday supplement at no extra cost with the largest-circulating newspaper in Buenos Aires. The workbook has been promoted by a public-service campaign on TV, with the slogan: «You can choose what your children watch. You can choose to watch TV with them». The workbook is sponsored by the newspaper, which includes the supplement free of charge. A number of private companies share in funding it.

• «Internet in the Family». This is a workbook for parents, so they can orient their children's Web surfing. The workbook gathers advice and recommendations for safe, protected use of Internet. The workbook came out once in 2008, circulating free of charge one Sunday with the newspapers in Buenos Aires. This workbook was backed by a public-service campaign on TV, with the slogan «When kids surf the Web, you are the best one to guide their course». The workbook is sponsored by the newspaper, which includes the supplement free of charge. A number of private companies share in funding it.

• «Cinema Week for High-school Students». This initiative strives to narrow the major cultural gaps affecting young people from poor background, most of whom can't afford to go to the movies. Exclusion from culture is just another manifestation of the cultural exclusion affecting lower-income adolescents. Therefore, sponsored by the Chamber of Movie Theatres of Argentina, we have launched «Cinema Week for High-School Students», so those from poor families attending public high schools can go to the movies for one week free of charge. The theatres are open, free of charge, for the adolescents. A selection of movies especially chosen by the «School and Media» Programme, with input from movie-makers, enables over 30 thousand youth to discover the big screen through films they would not usually see (Argentine, Latin American, European and North American). This initiative is sponsored by the

movie theatres . A private enterprise then brings out over 10 thousand programmes with the contents of the movies to be seen and activities for class, for use in schools.

## 7. Research: The Cultural Identity of Adolescents

Research has been an important aspect of the State media education Programme. For instance, the Programme conducted the first National Survey of Cultural Consumption by Adolescents. The idea was to get an overview of youth media and technology consumption, use, practices, values and meanings. This research has been fundamental to inform new action development and new priority-setting in public policy. The study was prepared by the School and Media Programme. The questionnaire design drew from a similar survey conducted in the United Kingdom and France by Sonia Livingstone and Dominique Pasquier, respectively. The School and Media Programme worked closely with the two researchers to assemble the questionnaire and prepare conclusions. A summary of the research is available on the Programme's Website: www.me.gov.ar/escuelaymedios.

This research has been fundamental to inform public policy design in this field. For example, one of the study's most striking findings was that 4 out of 10 adolescents had not gone to the movie theatre even once the preceding year (2005-06), mostly for economic reasons. So, the «School and Media» Programme took action the following year, with «Cinema Week for High-School Students». This was geared to address a cultural deficit affecting large strata of Argentina's population as clearly revealed by the research.

Similarly, low rates of reading among Argentine adolescents, found by this study, gave rise to the free magazine for high-school readers, «RE», Research has been the key to designing new initiatives by the Ministry of Education.

## 8. The Obstacles, the Challenges

Again, schooling began with Gütenberg and has therefore always been closer to print culture than to images. Pictures and visual culture have generally been under-estimated.

So, it comes as no surprise that one of the main obstacles to systematic insertion of media education may be to break through many teachers' negative associations with screens. The challenge stands, to narrow the gap still separating youth culture from school culture, by incorporating other languages, other ways of writing, other texts.

However, this is certainly not the only problem. As a public policy, media education must be built into initial teacher training, so that, when teachers start in their classrooms, they get there with some degree of preparation. Basic training of teachers in media education remains pending practically worldwide.

Latin America also has yet another serious difficulty: Latin America's societies are highly fragmented, unequal and inequitable. Access to cultural commodities is

very uneven. While a minority has access to all sources, media and technologies, most have access only to open broadcast TV, radio and perhaps the newspaper. They don't have a DVD player, they don't go to the movies, they never saw a play and have no home Internet connection. The divides in Latin America are not only digital, but cultural, and also involve the traditional media.

These gaps are not negligible, because they hinder young people's construction of cultural capital. Exclusion from cinema reinforces social exclusion, shrinking adolescents' cultural capital and thereby contracting their educational, workplace and societal insertion opportunities (Morduchowicz, 2004).

One of the specific challenges faced by media education in Latin America is to narrow these gaps and promote more equitable, fairer access to cultural and technological commodities among youth from the poorest families.

Although the obstacles are more than a few and the challenges are by no means negligible, the first step toward facing them is to insert media education as a public policy, as State policy. Fortunately, we have always had teachers who have used the media and taught others to analyze, interpret and use them creatively. The idea, when media education becomes part of public policy, is to move beyond individual initiative and turn these private efforts into a State commitment.

This is the only way to overcome the huge obstacles and materialize the major challenges posed by media education in the 21st century.

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# 2. Media Education beyond School

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## ABSTRACT

Education in and for the media is doubtlessly necessary and is very slowly slipping into regular education, but not very satisfactorily. This work must be fleshed out by the media sector efforts to take some responsibility for the educational work as well, not by educating directly, but by trying to match their broadcasts to the values that education is trying to convey. Audiovisual Councils can play a role in driving media education, helping the educational system meet its responsibility to educate children to use properly television, Internet and other screens habitually surrounding them. At the same time, these Councils can help media professionals enforce and construe legislation about audiovisual contents freely and responsibly, thereby facilitating self-regulation. This contribution, showcasing the experience garnered by the Audiovisual Council of Catalonia in promoting media literacy, provides insights on the balancing act of bringing multi-stakeholders around the table to discuss issues on which they don't necessarily have shared and convergent positions.

## KEY WORDS

Media education, self-regulation, Audiovisual Councils, ethics, audiovisual legislation.

It is increasingly evident that educating in and for audiovisual media is an unavoidable imperative. Education as a whole must adapt to the new context of multiple «screens» and use techniques and instruments that schools will have to get used to. Without giving up on writing or even on traditional chalkboards, schools must learn how to get different sources of knowledge to complement each other, and tap the powers of pictures for the benefit of reasoning. However, above all, it is urgent to start educating people about a reality featuring advantages and also certain hurdles that are worth a closer look. The major values that ought to guide human conduct and enable us to coexist have always been in jeopardy. But the threats looming over them are different in each age. Nowadays, television, video games, mobile phones, and Internet build a media and entertainment complex that exposes children to more direct, more universal influences than the traditional media, granting them access to possibilities for entertainment and for information that are harder to control. Education cannot be addressed with any realism if we ignore this scenario –we must take it into account.

The media, in turn, dodge regulation and want no outsider setting boundaries on the freedom of speech they wield. This is no obstacle to asking those same media to teach viewers to understand and even watch them critically. This will be the best way to preserve self-reliance, both for media practitioners and for their audiences. This is also a way to get everyone involved, with moral maturity, eventually to demand and get more decent media, coherent with the basic ethical principles and values that are foundational to our democracies.

They say that bringing up a child takes the whole tribe. Education, in other words, cannot be a solitary or sectoral undertaking. Doubtlessly, schools play a major role, since they bring together and apply the guidelines they are given by society. However, schools find themselves powerless to accomplish their mission without help from the world outside the classroom: first of all, families, and then the array of audiovisual and electronic media that children learn to handle and use so quickly that they soon leave behind any adults who want to show them how they work.

Such help with education is hard to elicit from other stakeholders in society. Among other things, because there is regulated education with set curricula determining the minimal knowledge that it is mandatory to convey. Anything lying beyond those rules that apply exclusively to school –beginning with the family– depends on the goodwill of the different agents, and their capacity to shoulder responsibly the role they need to play in each case. Of course, families have the primary responsibility for what their children do and watch on television. But we have to acknowledge that families also need help, especially during those time slots when parents, whose workdays do not match their children's school schedules, cannot directly meet their educational obligations.

Regarding the audiovisual media in general, and television in particular, it seems logical for their practitioners to be reluctant to assume educational responsibilities as their own business, especially if this is understood as making educational programming. Only public television has the obligation to do that part. Private television stations, in

turn, must accept a broader responsibility, derived from the conviction that, to say the least, they are inarguably a popular medium, highly influential in the way children learn to view the world. Therefore, they must be especially careful of the programming they broadcast during prime time for children.

Precisely because that responsibility is vague, hard to pin down as behavioural patterns or unmistakable best practices, educational administrators must do their part to get their teachers to meet the need to educate in and for the audiovisual media. The reality is that the administration seldom gets around to this. Media literacy is a new element, and we know how difficult it is to introduce innovations into administrative inertia. This element also entails teacher training and therefore a specific budget for it. It is also true that not all teachers see the urgency of audiovisual or digital education the same way, beyond the purely technical aspects taught by specialists in those subjects. We live in a society with experts for each problem, addressing our problems with blinders that make it almost impossible to find «cross-cutting» solutions. The same concept generates scepticism in view of the schools' failure in attempting to introduce cross-cutting knowledge into teaching.

That is where Audiovisual Councils can do interesting, timely work that fits perfectly with their more specific functions. These bodies are well positioned as mediators between the audiovisual media and society at large. At the same time, they are able to identify and support initiatives by schools. Regulatory authorities, if they understand their task, soon see how complex it is to oversee the audiovisual media. For one thing, they have to enforce a lot of rules about advertising timing, programme identification, respecting the schedule when children are watching, etc. But they must also know more about what is actually going on: what children prefer, how it influences their minds and develops their addiction to screens, when violence is going too far, what pornography is, what moral and non-moral values are broadcast by children's programmes, what identities they foster, and so many other questions that experts in education and communication have been posing for many years now. Audiovisual Councils are there to defend the rights of viewers –children and adults– from any abuse by the audiovisual media. Since they are the mediators of a basic good, namely freedom of speech and the right to information, any interference in their work immediately looks like censorship. Councils must often work indirectly, mediating among rights of different sorts: the right to freedom of speech, of course, but also the right to education. And the latter right cannot be guaranteed if the audiovisual media systematically undermine whatever families and schools try to convey through education.

## 1. Audiovisual Councils: the Spanish Anomaly

The situation of Spain's Audiovisual Councils is unique, to put it benevolently. I will explain this through my own personal experience, which gave me a close-up on the aborted initiative of creating the first Spanish Audiovisual Council. In 1993, I was elected senator to the Spanish Courts and charged with chairing a «commission on

television contents». The Commission was supposed to study the excesses of programming that had begun to go beyond the acceptable boundaries. The European Directive «Television Without Borders» had just been adapted to Spanish law and, for the first time, there seemed to be legal grounds enough to wield some control over the contents of television, especially to protect children.

To our surprise, we came across the existence of «Audiovisual Councils», with the mission of precisely supervising enforcement of the Law and defending viewers' rights from potential abuse by an industry mainly driven by advertising revenues. It was not difficult to reach a consensus among the political groups, to have a report assessing the dangers of television contents at that time, a report which very specifically recommended the creation of a Spanish Audiovisual Council.

Consensus was easily garnered in the Senate, because all political groups backed it, but little happened. When it came to drafting a law to create such a Council, the political parties –all of them– changed their minds. Private audiovisual companies pressured hard –and they have never let up that pressure– to keep the Council at the idea stage. No government since then (since 1996, when the report was submitted to and approved by the Senate) has had the will or courage to propose an Audiovisual Council for Spain.

However, the work done in the Senate was not wholly in vain. A few years later, the Catalonian Parliament passed a proposal by the autonomous government to create an Audiovisual Council. Although it started out as little more than an advisory council with little power, by the year 2000, it was fully on a par with the most independent European and international councils, with the greatest capacity for action. The French Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel was the model to build the first structure, which has expanded since then. At present, Catalonia's Audiovisual Council has full jurisdiction not only to enforce legislation regarding the audiovisual media, but also to decide on competitive selection processes and to grant sub-national radio and television frequencies. Not only was the Council created in Catalonia, and is in excellent health and well-recognized even by the audiovisual media that were so reluctant to let it exist, but in 2005, Catalonia passed an Audiovisual Law, absolutely indispensable to update all the regulations that had come out since Spain's first Broadcasting Statute in 1983. Catalonia's example of creating its Audiovisual Council was immediately followed by the autonomous community of Navarra, which created its own Council, and by the Board of Andalusia, which has had its own since 2006.

Notwithstanding this progress, the anomaly persists. It makes little sense for a medium such as television, with increasingly blurred boundaries, to be controlled in only a few of the territories of Spain. The Catalonian, Andalusian and Navarrese Audiovisual Councils oversee their local radio and television, but not national stations, which reach the homes of everyone in Catalonia, Navarra and Andalusia. This patchy jurisdiction is a comparative disadvantage for local media, and, more importantly, fails to defend the rights of viewers throughout the Spanish territory.

## 2. Audiovisual Councils and Media Education

The Audiovisual Council of Catalonia has, since the outset, been concerned with media education. The book for teachers, «How to Watch Television», was one of their first publications, with a second edition in both Catalonian and Spanish, widely distributed among schools. In 2002, the «White Book» was prepared and published. «Education in an Audiovisual Setting» was intended to assess the situation in Catalonia in order to propose measures to improve it and correct existing dysfunctions. The text has been broadly distributed throughout the Spanish territory and has served as a benchmark to highlight the deficits in the schools' media education and to indicate some guidelines to remedy them.

An independent administrative authority such as the Audiovisual Council does not often seek to team up with schools. In Europe, only OFCOM has taken up the task of leading media literacy in response to a specific British Government mandate. From a merely intuitive standpoint, it would seem obvious for an agency that oversees the audiovisual media, and particularly television, emphasizing protection for children, to assume that education is part of its business. At the end of the day, regulation of television contents cannot go much further than the European Directive provision: prohibiting anything that could harm children's physical, psychic or moral health. Does this give the Council a mandate to prohibit any sort of programming that is not pure, hard-core pornography? The wording of the legal mandate –«anything that could harm»– establishes a sort of causal relationship between programming and behaviours of the child audience, which is impossible to prove, since human behaviours cannot be explained by isolating a single variable that might influence them. The difficulty of empirically verifying the actual influence of television programming on people's behaviour encourages broadcasters to deny any educational drawbacks in their increasingly banal shows. Consequently, we end up having to trust the goodwill of media management and their desire not to hurt children too much. And to trust that children, especially, will get enough information to counteract any potential harmful effects from careless programming that neglects children's needs.

We are not giving up on regulation, but making clear how difficult it is to legislate precise criteria to distinguish suitable programming from unsuitable programming. Such criteria would be rejected as invasions of the freedom of speech, as already pointed out. Censorship of freedom of speech is a millstone around the necks of Audiovisual Councils the world over, as they must be careful to avoid destroying the work already achieved that is also absolutely necessary. Councils are very well positioned to propose interpretations of legal norms and the resulting recommendations, and to end up persuading media practitioners to do their part in the ethical responsibility for construing and enforcing the law. Broadcasters must take the attitude of asking, regarding a show during children's prime-time: «Would I like my own children to see all this?» It goes without saying that this question is often far from the concerns of companies striving above all to seize children's and young people's attention, at whatever cost. Nevertheless, taking seriously the function that television ought to perform in order «not to harm» children means just that: reflecting on how it fits in with educational aims.

Overseeing audiovisual media is not just a question of levying penalties when the Law is broken. Such policing can be done, but only in quite exceptional cases. For this reason, more than a specific function of pure oversight, what Audiovisual Councils do is contribute to co-regulation, encouraging joint work between television companies and citizen organizations or societal agents, so programming improves and actually serves the viewership. Some stations have their own educational council to advise them. It would be good for them all to have such councils.

And it would also be good for those most directly responsible for education – family, school and teachers– to shoulder the obligation of teaching ways to understand audiovisual (and digital) language, and decode it adequately. This is not just a technical skill that children pick up before their parents or teachers do. This is a social, moral or citizenship-based competency. «Technological reductionism» is one of the dangers gripping the new media. Learning to use the media means more than just handling them technically; it calls for the ability to distinguish quality from junk, good information from hype, learning not to be swept up in advertising excitement, and to correct for the tendency to soak up media contents passively. To teach this ability, teachers or parents must first know what their children and students are exposed to, and give them the tools to react and defend themselves from potentially noxious influences.

This complex task requires physical means, some training, and the time to put one's ideas into practice. Generally, administrators agree to provide the hardware, but ignore the need to adapt teachers to the new situations they must face. Nor are teachers encouraged to do so. Generally, a few enthusiastic teachers manage to persuade the rest, investing their own generosity and good faith heavily. That is why assistance from Audiovisual Councils may be priceless. If Councils can understand that contributing to media education is also part of their mandate, they will mediate between school authorities, teachers and the audiovisual world.

## 3. The Experience of Catalonia's Audiovisual Council

The conviction that it is absolutely fundamental for Audiovisual Councils to partner with schools has accompanied Catalonia's Audiovisual Council since the beginning. In addition to publishing material for schools, the Council has led a series of measures to drive research and orient instruction toward media literacy. Accordingly, the Catalonian Council has signed a series of agreements with different local universities to motivate researchers along these lines. As well as arranging specific studies with consolidated research teams, an annual contest, targeting younger researchers, makes special mention of media education as one top-priority line to pursue.

Moreover, the Audiovisual Council of Catalonia holds a yearly competition for elementary and secondary school students, and for their teachers, to present their work and experiences in audiovisual literacy training. The goal is to encourage classroom work and encourage teachers' imaginations, to find new ways and methods to teach youngsters how to watch television, to use Internet wisely, and the many other media now comprising children's natural environment.

A pioneering, far-reaching project in this area is the document prepared by a number of professors from several Spanish universities, led by Joan Ferrés, regarding «Competencies in Audiovisual Communication». The document and the body of writing sparked by its discussions have been published by the Audiovisual Council of Catalonia in a number of its «Quaderns». This document is serving its purpose as the starting-point for a long-term empirical study, sampling different ages, and ascertaining the degree of competency in using the media of Spain's population. For what it's worth, «competency» is a core concept in current educational discussions. In the field of communication, «competency» must include not only technical aspects but also –perhaps fundamentally– social, ethical and aesthetic dimensions. The idea is ultimately to see how well citizens can process images and information they receive «reasonably» and not contrary to what we may continue to call «the common good». It is also to see how well citizens can tell what is correct or not, what is good quality from bad production. Good and bad, right and wrong, fair and unfair are not purely subjective concepts, although subjectivity also plays a part. Overcoming the fear of falling into pure subjectivity and realizing that culture per se and the products culture offers can be assessed, is a fundamental step toward undertaking media literacy more rigorously and effectively.

A former director of the Federal Communications Commission in the United States ruled some years ago that «Television is always instructive. The question we have to ask is: What does it teach?» We won't have an answer to that question if we are unclear about the citizenry's community «competency» and what can be done in the educational system to help that competency progress and improve. At a time when ethical values seem to be driven aside by the values promoted by the consumer economy, we must ascertain whether the audiovisual media are helping or hindering the building of citizenship. The type of individual comprising the most developed societies is a consumer, not a citizen. But democracies need citizens. And one of the characteristics of a citizen is precisely not to be purely receptive or merely passive to messages and information that come along, but to have the necessary capacity to process them critically.

So it is paradoxical to see how, in the so-called «Knowledge Society», one of the most vulnerable values is knowledge itself. Receiving plentiful information, but superficial and fragmentary, about all imaginable topics, is not the same as acquiring knowledge. To know something, mere receptivity is quite insufficient. Regulated education cannot ignore this truth if it expects even minimally satisfactory results. Obtaining information about what is going on is the first step to get one's bearings in reality and take charge of it –but the second step is learning to select among that information and judge its value. When the receiver judges a mediated reality, he or she is adding value to the messages –but this added value requires training, because reality does not judge itself.

This does not mean adopting a negative attitude, rejecting the new media environment, by any means. Like any innovation, it must be commended for the advantages it offers, but with safeguards against potential dysfunctions, which society

must address if it wishes to progress in human terms and not just in technological ones. Information technologies have great potential, which may be tapped for good or evil. Since these are technological innovations, it is easy to focus just on technical progress, without taking into account that this technology is only the vehicle carrying certain contents. Education, again, cannot focus solely on technical competency, but on communicational competency in the broadest sense of the term. Without a doubt, audiovisual and digital culture facilitates faster, more convenient, easier information and communication. The question is: Will it also represent progress for knowledge, for democracy, for solidarity and for personal self-determination? New ways to communicate can surely reinforce all these values and facts of citizenship. They can, if there is the explicit will to use them that way. Without such goodwill, the new technologies, which are blind, will have no way of knowing which way to go.

Media literacy must bear in mind, beyond technological and economic factors, key social, democratic and civic values. Technology by itself does not improve persons or perfect democracies, or even contribute to increasing knowledge. Technology is a chance and a means to make this all happen –which is why it is so important to learn to use it, and to have agencies devoted actively to encouraging that learning.

## Note

Since this article presents the activities of the Audiovisual Council of Catalonia regarding media literacy, the bibliography is limited to the Council's publications in that area. They can all be found at the Council's Website: www.cac.cat.

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# 3. The Role of Broadcasting Regulation in Media Literacy

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ABSTRACT

The author presents a global perspective on the reasons why television is regulated, the mechanisms used for regulation, and what regulation covers, particularly its cultural purposes and its human rights references. She explores the different regulatory systems and the major rules and instruments that are conducive to an independent body with democratic legitimacy. The author makes the case for continuous regulation of television in spite of the end of the scarcity rationale, positing that digital convergence will increase issues related to rights and responsibilities of broadcasters regarding content, advertisement, and other public value issues. She concludes with suggestions about how regulatory purposes and practices might change as nations move towards a converged, digital future. Taking the example of the UK's regulator, OFCOM, she examines how a regulatory authority can take a leading role in media literacy, adding to its existing missions of allocating and regulating spectrum. Regulation, to be truly effective and accepted by citizens, will need to rely on extensive media literacy.

KEY WORDS

Television, regulation, independent regulator, convergence, media literacy, freedom of expression, protection.

## 1. Media Rights and Freedoms

All around the world, television is regulated. The extent of the regulation and how it is done varies, although the general themes are fairly universal. But as nations move towards a converged, digital future, key questions remain: Why should television be regulated? And if it is regulated, then who should do it, and how should they do it? Should regulation be only about protection? Should regulation also have a role in education? And indeed, can regulation be truly effective without education?

These are essential questions, and the reason why they are so important is because television is important, however transmitted, be it over the air, cable, satellite or internet. Throughout the developed world, nearly every household has at least one television set. Indeed, an examination of 184 countries worldwide showed that over 65% of households had one television set, with most in the developed world having an average of two per household[1]. People watch television for hours each day; after sleeping and working, more time is spent watching television than anything else in the lives of people in the developed world –East and West.

Although nobody regulates people's sleeping habits –at least not yet– there are many laws that protect people while they work: labour laws, health and safety legislation, and so on. Given that so much of people's time is spent watching television, maybe it is comforting to think that this, too, is subject to a degree of protective super-vision. After all, television is important –as well as interesting. As the British humorist Alan Coren said, «Television is more interesting than people. If it were not, we would have people standing in the corners of our rooms».

Television has been, and remains, the most powerful mass medium of the modern age. It is more powerful than radio because it adds pictures to the sound. It became more powerful than newspapers because it is largely free to receive. And it is still more powerful than the internet because of the very fact that it is broadcasting and reaches a mass audience: it is not a one-to-one medium, but one-to-many and therefore it has the capacity to influence and change millions of people at once. Politicians quickly understood the potential of television and have used it as their main means of speaking to the electorate. And so too have advertisers, who understand that, as a way of communicating with a large group of consumers, television is unparalleled.

Given the power of television, it is understandable that governments have wished to exercise a degree of control over it. In authoritarian regimes, that has meant the government censoring information and restricting debate. In benign governments, it means ensuring that television is used for the public good to promote democratic expression and cultural heritage, and that viewers are protected from potential harm. For the purpose of this analysis, regulation as a tool of censorship and repression will not be examined. Rather, the analysis will bear on what is often referred to as the «European model», where regulation is used to protect basic rights, including freedom of expression, comparing it, when need be, to other models and countries.

Freedom of expression and information constitutes one of the essential human rights and it is important in democratic societies for there to be a wide range of independent and autonomous means of communication. Article 19 of the Universal

Declaration of Human Rights 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». But this is not an unrestricted right and it comes with responsibilities.

In Europe, the right to freedom of expression is subject to certain conditions and limitations which are set out in law. Typically (and as set out in Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights, for example), the exclusions cover: the prevention of disorder or crime, the protection of health or morals, the protection of the reputation and rights of others (including the right to privacy), preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence, and maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary[2]. Therefore one of the key issues for legislators is determining where the balance lies between potentially conflicting rights: the commercial rights of the broadcaster, society's rights as represented by the State, and the individual rights.

Totalitarian states generally make it an offence to broadcast material which may be critical of their government. Unfortunately, there are still many such states, even in Europe, like the Republic of Belarus for example. Although these States may represent an extreme position, most countries will not tolerate broadcasting which encourages revolt. A balance must be sought which, on the one hand, allows freedom of expression of opinion, but does not, on the other hand, go so far as to incite to crime, including political insurgence. Wherever the balance is drawn, it is vital that the rules are codified to enable broadcasters, viewers, and law-makers to know where the boundaries of acceptability and proportionality lie. And in order for those rules to be truly effective and reflective of the society that makes them, viewers –that is, citizens– must also understand and accept them.

## 2. Why Is Television Regulated?

Historically, the legal justification for the regulation of television has relied on the fact that television uses a scarce, public resource: spectrum. The spectrum which broadcasters use is allocated to each country by an agency of the United Nations, the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), and the individual countries then divide that spectrum into separate channels and assign it to the broadcasters. There is only so much spectrum available for each country and therefore it is a scarce resource and potentially quite valuable. For example, in the UK, all television spectrum already has been allocated and the regulator, OFCOM, is introducing spectrum pricing which will mean that every broadcaster will have to pay for the spectrum they use, based on commercial market value. It is very unusual for a country to have no method of controlling the use of television spectrum: even war-torn countries like Iraq and Afghanistan licence their broadcast spectrum and they have regulators in place to do the licensing.

As Lord Reith, the founder of the BBC said, television is there to inform, educate, and entertain and, arguably, television can do this more effectively than any other single medium. So, the use of scarce, valuable public resources for informing, educating and entertaining society justifies its regulation.

## 3. Who Should Regulate?

If there is going to be regulation, then there needs to be someone with the legal authority to do it: a regulator. There are three options: regulation done by an independent regulator; regulation done through a government minister and his/her department, and regulation by the courts.

### 3.1. Independent Regulators

It is generally agreed as best international practice that an important element in the preservation of broadcasting as part of the democratic process is the establishment of an independent broadcasting regulator. To be independent, the broadcasting regulatory authority must be able to function free from any interference or pressure from political or economic forces. An independent regulatory authority should have its duties and responsibilities set out in law, and its decisions should be subject to appeal in a court of law.

Internationally, there is an increase in the number of «converged» regulatory bodies exercising more than one regulatory function. For example, in the UK, OFCOM regulates broadcasting, telecommunications, and spectrum management as well as having certain competition functions. In Malaysia, the regulator is also responsible for the Post Office. The Gibraltar Regulatory Authority adds gambling to the list. But, whatever the regulatory functions that are covered, if the regulator is independent from political pressure and interference, the outcome –for citizens– will be television which is also more independent. This is particularly important in democracies, where the availability of an independent media is vital for a functioning, informed electorate.

To achieve an independent regulator, the process of appointment should be transparent, and set out in statute. In many societies, it can be a major challenge for politicians in government to agree to a process which will deliver a regulatory authority consisting of independent individuals; there is no «right» method. Each country must consider how best to appoint men and women who are representative of the broad spectrum of society, who are qualified to take the range of complex decisions incumbent upon a broadcasting regulator, and who have the strength of character to resist political and financial pressures.

One of the most invidious ways in which a regulatory authority can be subject to political pressure and influence is through the threat of dismissal of its chairman or members. Therefore, the law should state clearly the factors which may lead to dismissal, for example, physical or mental incapacity, or a clear breach of the rules of propriety.

Funding can also be used as a means of exerting political pressure: if the authority does not act in accordance with government wishes, funding could be withdrawn. Terms of funding should be set out in law, and, wherever possible, be kept separate from any potential political interference.

### 3.2. Government Regulators

Where there is no independent regulator, decisions about licensing or authorising television broadcasts are usually done directly by a government department. This can, of course, lead to direct political intervention in determining who can and cannot broadcast. Whilst this can seem superficially attractive to governments, it becomes less attractive if the government in future finds itself out of power and in opposition with an antagonistic broadcast media working against its interests!

For example, in the Czech Republic, members of the Television and Radio Broadcasting Council are appointed by Parliament. At the time of their appointment in 2000, government was formed by two main parties, the ODS and CSSD. An election in 2002 shifted the balance of power to a new coalition made up of CSSD with the support of two other parties. The ODS is now in opposition. This has not only caused tension between the government and the regulator, but also between government and the most popular television channel which is thought to be pro-ODS and anti the new coalition partners. This television channel was, of course, licensed by the Broadcasting Council.

### 3.3. Regulation by the Court

The third instrument for regulation is direct exercise of the law by the courts. In quite a few countries, even though an independent regulatory authority sets out the standards which must be applied to all programme content (usually through the publication of a designated Code)[3], any breach of these standards is considered by the courts, not the regulatory authority. This means that any sanctions –such as fines or the revocation of a licence– are determined through a judicial, rather than an administrative process. What must be balanced are the speed, ease and relative low cost of administrative sanctions with the security of proper judicial due process.

For example, in Sweden, the Swedish Broadcasting Authority (SBA) is the regulator responsible for ensuring that all licensed broadcasters comply with the terms of their licences as well as the Radio and Television Act. If a licence condition is breached (for example, a requirement to observe political impartiality), the SBA can order the broadcaster to announce the SBA's decision in a broadcast. However, if a rule set out in the Radio Television Act (on advertising, sponsorship or undue prominence) is breached, the SBA must petition the Court. It is then up to the Court to determine whether or not to impose a fine and if so, how much.

## 4. How to Regulate?

### 4.1. Licensing

The mechanism used for placing obligations on broadcasters is generally through licensing. It is rare for the State to give away or sell broadcast spectrum in perpetuity; generally broadcasters are allowed to use it for limited set periods under a licence. Sometimes, licences are sold by the government; often they are free. Depending on the level of demand, they are either allocated on a first-come first-served basis, or

competitions are held. But it is through the licensing process that basic regulatory conditions are applied and enforced.

### 4.2. Legal Instruments

In addition, the general law will apply to television broadcasters. Sometimes, provisions which refer specifically to television content are set out in legislation; alternatively, they are set out in separate codes or secondary legislation. For example, the Canadian Broadcasting Act provides for the creation of regulations through secondary legislation. The Canadian Television Broadcasting Regulations set out a number of provisions relating to content which broadcasters must follow. To support these regulations, a self-regulatory body, the Canadian Broadcasting Standards Council, has developed its own codes to which members (all Canadian broadcasters) must comply. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Communications Regulatory Agency must write, publish and apply its own broadcast content code as instructed in the Law of Communications. It adopted its new code in January 2008.

### 5. What Is Regulated?

### 5.1. Cultural Purposes

One of the very key reasons why television is regulated is to ensure that what people see on the screen reflects their society and enhances their values and ethics. In this regard, regulation of content differs from censorship. Whereas censorship involves the application of rules by a legitimate (usually State) authority prior to publication or broadcast, regulation entails the post hoc application of rules by a legitimate authority to what has already been published. Regulation cannot directly prevent the publication of material; it can only apply sanctions for breaches of the rules after the fact. In practice, the existence of regulation inevitably leads to self-censorship by broadcasters, as they seek to avoid being punished for breaking the rules. However, the ultimate choice of whether or not to publish is that of the broadcaster, and not of the regulator; the regulator exercises no editorial control.

More than any other aspect of regulation, effective content regulation is inextricably linked to media literacy. If the purpose of content regulation is to ensure that programme content reflects generally accepted standards and expectations, then viewers –as well as broadcasters and the regulator– have to understand what they can expect to receive through their television sets. In fact, regulation works best when all players are working to the same understanding: viewers tell the regulator what they want, the regulator encodes those expectations in regulation, and broadcasters, following the rules, give the public what they wish to see. When this cycle runs effectively, a media literate citizenry is able to ensure that the quality and standards of television –as policed by the regulator– remain high.

### 5.1.1. Protecting Children

Nearly everywhere in the world, countries set rules to ensure that children are not harmed –either physically, psychologically or morally– and apply regulations restricting violence, sexual portrayal and bad language. Many countries insist that warnings precede programmes which are not suitable for children, or that on-screen symbols are used to «rate» programmes. Many countries also operate a «watershed» system for television, where programmes which have more adult themes or content cannot be shown while young children are most likely to be watching, usually before 21.00 or 22.00.

### 5.1.2. Protecting Against Harm and Offence

As well as protecting children, society is also concerned about protecting adults. In some countries, issues of taste and decency are heavily regulated to ensure that nobody –even adults– are offended by what they see. For example, in most Muslim countries, nothing can be broadcast which offends against the morals and ethical code of Islam. This will extend from not permitting any encouragement of dating (which is not allowed in Islam) to showing any nudity at all.

Most European countries also apply rules which prevent the most offensive material from being shown, particularly material which is considered to be degrading to human dignity. What is considered offensive will vary considerably from country to country, and is very culturally specific. For example, sexual nudity is frowned upon in the USA, whereas graphic violence is fairly tolerated. By contrast, in the UK violence is limited, whereas fairly graphic sexual behaviour is acceptable, at least late at night. Attitudes to homosexuality also vary considerably, even within Europe[4].

Although issues of taste will vary from society to society –and must be developed in a culturally sensitive way– there are also issues of harm which are perhaps more universal. At its most obvious, there are usually rules which prevent television being used as an instrument to generate crime or disorder. In particular, no government will tolerate television being used to provoke political uprising. Rules against harm can include not permitting details of suicide, or how to commit crimes, or showing dangerous behaviour which could be easily imitated by children.

Given the power of the broadcast media, it is perhaps especially important to apply and enforce rules to ensure that programmes do not broadcast material –including the views of interviewees or programme guests– which discriminate against people, for example on the grounds of race, nationality, religion or sex. Associated with this, many regulators apply rules which prevent stereotyping of ethnic minorities, women, and disabled people.

Religious broadcasting is another sensitive area where special rules may be applied to ensure that due respect is given to all religious beliefs, and religious intolerance is not provoked. Again, this will vary from country to country: in Muslim countries, it is illegal to encourage conversion from Islam, whereas conversion to Islam is positively encouraged.

### 5.1.3. Protection against Unfair Treatment

Given the power of broadcasting, broadcasters generally are under an obligation to be fair in their treatment of both subjects and participants in programmes. In many parts of the world, broadcasters are required to offer a prompt right of reply to any person or organisation where a programme has been inaccurate and as a result, unfair.

### 5.1.4. Accurate and Impartial News

One of the key requirements for the proper application of democracy is the availability of accurate news. Although this is a key standard of good journalism, it is perhaps particularly important in the broadcast media, given their persuasive power. Some countries, for example many within Europe, also require news to be impartial and unbiased. This is not the case in others, for example the USA, where the editorial bias of the channel's owner can filter through to news.

### 5.1.5. Election Coverage

It is also vital in any functioning democracy to ensure that election coverage is dealt with in a fair and accurate way. Many countries apply strict rules on the amount of political advertising that can be broadcast, especially during an election period. Most European countries also apply rules which require that each major political party receive balanced and equal coverage in news and other programming.

### 5.1.6. Consumer Protection

Another aspect of television regulation is consumer protection. An obvious means of protecting consumers is to require that all television advertising is accurate and not misleading. Most countries have methods in place to regulate advertising: at times, it is done by the main television regulator, although it is often done through self-regulatory bodies that have responsibility for all advertising, regardless of media. In addition, many countries apply specific rules prohibiting television advertising of certain products (such as guns, or cigarettes) or restricting the times at which they can be advertised (for example, alcohol or contraceptives).

Many countries seek to set rules which limit the amount of advertising available on broadcast services. Within the European Economic Area, there are strict rules on the amount of television advertising which is permitted, with an average of 12 minutes per hour allowed. There are also rules setting out the spacing of advertising breaks within programmes, and rules on the scheduling of advertising. While these rules have an effect on the advertising market (sometimes serving to increase the cost of television advertising by limiting its availability), the prime purpose is to ensure that viewers' enjoyment of television is not marred by too many or too frequent advertising breaks. Similarly, European television is subject to strict rules maintaining a separation between advertising and programming, meaning that product placement and undue prominence of commercial products is not permitted. These rules are enforced in

order to ensure that editorial integrity is not undermined by commercial interests, again at least in part to enhance the quality of television for viewers.

### 5.1.7. Positive Obligations: Public Service Broadcasting

As well as restricting what can be broadcast, television regulation can also place positive obligations on broadcasters, for example by obliging them to broadcast what is known as public service programmes, typically news, educational, religious and children's programming.

A core decision for governments is whether they will provide for a dedicated public service broadcaster who is independent of government but which is obliged to provide certain programming in the public interest in return for a degree of State support. This support is usually in the form of funding, either in part (as in Kosovo where advertiser funding is supplemented by a charge added to every electricity bill), or in whole (as in the UK where the BBC is funded entirely by a compulsory licence fee charged to all households with a television).

Increasingly throughout the world where State broadcasters still exist, steps are being taken to transfer them to being independent public service broadcasters accountable to an independent board, appointed by government. Wherever a public service broadcaster is being set up, the fundamental issues are: determining the method of governance and accountability, deciding how it is to be funded, and what the key programming obligations are to be.

One of the reasons why public service broadcasting is supported by most governments in the world has to do with cultural imperatives. Many governments are increasingly worried about the effects of globalisation on local culture, often citing the spread of American television as a cause of a loss of local or national identity. The provision of public service broadcasting offsets this trend, as it is a means of ensuring that there is at least one television service whose role is to reflect society back to itself.

### 5.2. Other Reasons for Television Regulation

Regulation can also have economic objectives, to promote trade, and fair competition but these are less likely to overlap with the interests of media literacy. However, regulatory bodies usually have responsibilities to apply ownership regulations to ensure adequate plurality of ownership of broadcasters. At times, these can be quite restrictive and straightforward, such as in Armenia where no company is permitted to hold more than one television licence in any one locality. Or they can be more complex, as in France, where an intricate matrix is applied limiting the numbers of overlapping television, radio and newspapers that any one body can own. Such ownership rules go beyond economic competition concerns; they are applied to ensure that there is a range of sources of information available to the public. For that reason, citizens should be able to understand why having a choice of news providers, a range of information sources is indeed important. But even where citizens do not have that

awareness, regulation –in the form of ownership limits– acts as a proxy. Clearly, the regulator cannot force viewers to compare and contrast television stations, but it can ensure that a choice is at least available.

### 6. Digital Future: Media Literacy as Part of the Regulation and Self-Regulation Process?

If this, then, is historically how and why television has been regulated, what of the future? The reasons for regulating broadcasting stem from the basic premise that, as television uses spectrum –which is a scarce public resource– it is reasonable for the State to apply restrictions and obligations on its use. But this scarcity rationale argument loses much of its power when considering the digital future, which offers an abundance of channels.

Around the world, what is now known as analogue terrestrial television is coming to an end. This is because the spectrum which is currently allocated on a global basis to television is going to be made available for other uses, most likely mobile tele-communications, though discussions about the use of this «digital dividend» are not over yet (community associations are seeking to claim some of it). Instead, television services will move to another part of the spectrum which enables the television signals to be condensed and sent more efficiently. Major public policy choices have to be made in advance of this move to digital television: Will the new technology be used for the broadcast of a greater number of television services –which is how digital television will be applied in Europe– or will it be used to enable high definition tele-vision with better picture quality, as the USA has decided? And all of this is happening quickly, with the USA moving to digital by 2010, and much of Europe planning the switchover by 2012.

But, whatever decisions are taken about how digital television spectrum will be used, the fact remains that the scarcity arguments are no longer as relevant as a basic justification for regulating television. Whether or not used for that purpose, digital spectrum can accommodate far more television services than the current analogue spectrum. Add to this the fact that cable and satellite distribution systems are also in the process of becoming digitalised –thereby effectively doing away with any arguments about scarcity– there is room for everybody. Furthermore, as broadband penetration increases and bandwidths grow, the availability of television delivery over the internet becomes very much a reality.

So, in the new digital world, to what extent do the arguments for regulating television remain? If the main barrier to entry –shortage of space– has been eliminated, is there still a justification for licensing television, restricting content or imposing obligations on what should be broadcast?

Many believe there are, although the scope and priorities of regulation are likely to change.

Examining the current reasons for regulating television, it can be seen that many of them lose much of their rationale when applied to the multi-channel, converged digital future. For example, with a large market and lower barriers to entry, there is

little reason to regulate for the traditional economic purposes above and beyond the application of general competition law. Instead, the focus shifts to ensuring that access to new platforms and electronic programme guides is offered on fair and non-discriminatory terms. Where there is a public service broadcaster, the regulator has to consider whether the regulatory framework and funding is adequate: Can the PSB afford to move to digital, to use the internet and offer new channels? Is it necessary to impose «must carry» provisions on new platforms, and to ensure that the PSB gets priority listing on any electronic programme guides, as happens in the UK?

But if the focus of economic regulation shifts, what about the cultural reasons for regulation, ensuring that accepted standards of protection are applied? There is no reason to believe that the public, as well as governments, will stop expecting children to be protected, or for there to be no adequate protection against harm and offence, unfair treatment, nor protection for democratic purposes or consumer protection. In the same way, there will be even more need to educate and inform the public and their children about their rights and responsibilities online and offline. In future, there will be a change which is already beginning: rather than relying on regulatory authorities to bear the brunt of responsibility, the focus of regulation will start to shift towards more self-regulation by both providers and users. Content providers, be they broadcasters or internet providers and distributors, will increasingly be expected to give audiences more information about content, for example by using ratings and tools such as filters, to enable users to decide themselves what they will and will not access.

However, audiences will only be able to take decisions about what they want to watch if they are informed and trained. Therefore, the role of media literacy and education will grow –that is, the means by which the public learns how to manage this new, multi-informational, mass media converged digital world. There is no doubt that the regulator will continue to have an important role to play even as countries shift towards greater self-regulation and individual responsibility, both by putting the means in place to oversee new regulatory methods and by leading the push towards greater media literacy. Already, regulators in a number of countries are taking an interest in media literacy, including Australia, Canada, Israel, New Zealand, Chile, Romania and Turkey. In the UK, the communications regulator OFCOM has a specific remit to promote media literacy[5]. Its work is intended:

  • To give people the opportunity and motivation to develop competence and confidence to participate in communications technology and digital society.

  • To inform and empower people to manage their own media activity (both consumption and creation).

It does this mainly by setting itself the goal to be the leading centre of research on media literacy, by acting as a network hub amongst a wide range of stakeholders, and by identifying and supporting projects such as those which encourage older people to gain confidence using digital and internet technology, in preparation for the digital switchover. Another significant aspect of OFCOM's involvement in media literacy has been its support of common principles for information provision and labelling to

be applied by all providers of audiovisual content (both broadcasting and on-line) in relation to potentially harmful and/or offensive material.

There is an undoubted question over the extent to which a statutory regulatory body should lead the move into media literacy: Surely this is something which should involve the industry, educationalists, social scientists and citizens themselves? Nonetheless, the regulatory authority is in an ideal position to act as a neutral arbiter and –importantly– as an advisor to government on media literacy initiatives. Furthermore, the legitimisation of the role of the regulator itself depends to a large extent on citizens' understanding of the purpose and means of regulation.

Media literacy includes ensuring that television viewers understand there is a «watershed» (if there is one) and what it means; or understanding that they have a right to be able to believe what they see on their television news, and to complain if they see something which does not meet generally accepted standards. The regulator has a key role to play not only in developing sound and appropriate responses to regulatory policies, but also in disseminating a practical understanding of those policies to audiences. Because, regardless of the growth in the number of media channels or the method of delivery of those channels, there will remain the desire to ensure that our most important conduit for understanding the world remains fair, honest, decent and true.

## Notes

[1] See www.nationmaster.com/graph/med_hou_wit_tel-media-households-with-television#definition using the World Development Indicators Database using available data from 1987 to 2005. It is likely the figure is higher by now.

[2] «Article 13 of the American Convention on Human Rights (or the Pact of San Jose), which applies in much of Latin America, also sets out limitations on the right to freedom of expression. Those limitations are: the rights or reputations of others and the protection of national security, public order, or public health or morals. In addition, film censorship is specifically allowed, and incitement to hatred on grounds of race, colour, religion, language or national origin may be punishable by law. By contrast, the United States of America has taken a different route. Freedom of speech is set out in the First Amendment to the Constitution as an inalienable right, with no restrictions contained in either the Constitution itself or its Amendments. The only limitations to that right are those which have been agreed by the Supreme Court».

[3] See, for example, the OFCOM Broadcasting Code at www.ofcom.org.uk/tv/ifi/codes/bcode.

[4] For example, a homosexual kiss broadcast before 21.00 on the popular BBC hospital soap, «Casualty», was not held to be offensive by the UK regulatory authorities. However, a group of Romanian television regulators, when shown the relevant clip by the author, declared it to be the most disgusting thing they had seen.

[5] Section 11 of the Communications Act 2003 states: «Duty to promote media literacy.

1) It shall be the duty of OFCOM to take such steps, and to enter into such arrangements, as appear to them calculated:

   a) To bring about, or to encourage others to bring about, a better public understanding of the nature and characteristics of material published by means of the electronic media.

   b) To bring about, or to encourage others to bring about, a better public awareness and understanding

of the processes by which such material is selected, or made available, for publication by such means.

c) To bring about, or to encourage others to bring about, the development of a better public awareness of the available systems by which access to material published by means of the electronic media is or can be regulated.

d) To bring about, or to encourage others to bring about, the development of a better public awareness of the available systems by which persons to whom such material is made available may control what is received and of the uses to which such systems may be put.

e) To encourage the development and use of technologies and systems for regulating access to such material, and for facilitating control over what material is received, that are both effective and easy to use.

2) In this section, references to the publication of anything by means of the electronic media are references to its being:

a) Broadcast so as to be available for reception by members of the public or of a section of the public.

b) Distributed by means of an electronic communications network to members of the public or of a section of the public».

# 4. Media Education in Turkey: Toward a Multi-Stakeholder Framework

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## ABSTRACT

Starting with the 1990s, private radios and televisions were the primary steps in Turkish media's new structure. At that time, there was no interest in media literacy or media education for people, especially for children. In the past, the emphasis of media literacy education was to protect children and young people from possible harmful effects of media, which was later followed by critical thinking and development of media messages production skills. This application emphasizes the political, social, and economic implications of media messages and stresses the importance of using media effectively. Media literacy and education in Turkey has started with an agreement between the Ministry of National Education and the Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) in 2006-07 school period. Media literacy courses respectively consist of these topics: Introduction to communication; mass communication; media; television; family, children and television; radio, newspapers magazine, and Internet. This study uses a critical approach to reflect what has been done so far in Turkey in terms of media literacy and media education, and what needs to be accomplished in the future. There is still great need for critical understanding and questioning through media literacy and education. Some important issues, such as democracy, citizenship, human rights, freedom of expression, identity, the special needs population, and women, are essential to consider within media literacy and education.

## KEY WORDS

## 1. Introduction

This analysis is a contribution that intends to show how media literacy and education are being organized by media regulation authorities and other organizations, against the background of today's media structures in Turkey. Accordingly, it will first focus on the movements in media in Turkey after the 1980s to establish the basis for today's media structure, and then it will move to the articulations between this structure and media literacy and education. It will finally suggest some lessons for policy-makers in the region interested in developing dialogue and peace via media education.

In Turkey, the 1980s had significant implications in the daily lives of people. Especially, the military coup on 12 September 1980 created a new scene in contemporary Turkish history. Besides, ending the political upheavals and the atmosphere of terror in Turkey, civil politics had to be inactive for almost three years until the elections of 6 November 1983. Starting from 1983, the period can be called as Özal period – some scholars refer to it as «Özalism years» (Turgut Özal's Prime Ministry years). With the politics and practices of Özal governments, major changes have occurred in the structure of the Turkish state that have allowed for new issues and discussions to appear in the cultural and social life of Turkey. In the economic sector, Turkey experienced and underwent significant structural changes during this period, following the economic decisions of 24th of January 1980 that allowed for the transition to market economy privatization (Sarýsu, 2003). In the political domain, the liberalization movement in Turkey had its main results also during the 1980s. Prime Minister Turgut Özal, the leader of the Motherland Party (Anavatan Partisi, ANAP) from 1983 to 1988, exercised policies of liberalization and implemented privatization. During Özal's post-military term, there were major changes in the economic indicators, the national wealth grew and Turkey quickly became a consumption society, turned towards Europe, all the more so as it was applying for entrance in the European Union.

Especially, the 1980s were the years the private sector started to make increasing investments in various areas, such as banking, energy and media. Many different holdings and large corporations directed their resources to industries, particularly in communications and telecommunications, which also had its significant outcomes (new infrastructure for communications, digitalization, new technology transfer, connection to outside world through advanced technologies, etc.) on the establishment of private media in Turkey in the early 1990s. Until that time, there was a limited investment in telecommunications. During Özal years, it became one of the most important areas for investors and it carried additional strength for media and communications.

In Turkey, after the 1980s, along with the transition to liberal-market economy and globalization, telecommunications and media became one of the main interest areas of those who wanted to invest in different sectors. They did not have only economic interests but also political interests related to their attachments to political groups. One of the most important examples refers to Turgut Özal's son. During Özal's prime ministry, his son, Ahmet Özal, established the first private television station –also the first «pirate» television station according to the laws enforced at the

time. It mainly served for the interest of his father's party. At the same time, some other investor groups in relation to political parties also started establishing other television stations. These first television stations used European countries as their base for broadcasting. Simply, they send broadcast signals from Europe to Turkey because of the state's monopoly on broadcasting. Later on, some television stations were established with the assistance of political parties. The political parties' relation to these television stations was apparent but it was almost impossible to prove it on official paper. During that same period, some municipalities and opinion newspapers established their own television stations. But most of them could not last because of political and financial reasons.

## 2. Media in Turkey

As a result of the developments in Turkey's economy, the late 1980s can be considered as the basis of the first movements in private media establishments besides already existing private print media outlets. September 1990 is the starting point for private televisions. A commercial television station, STAR 1, «benefiting from a loophole in the monopoly law, began broadcasting its programmes in Turkish via satellite from Germany. Inside Turkey the channel was officially forbidden to preserve Turkish Radio & Television's (TRT) monopoly, but it was relayed terrestrially by local municipalities as a symbol of political opposition to the government. Until it was granted terrestrial status, STAR 1's progress was slow. Once a privately owned television channel had been established, to compete with TRT, a whole host of new private television and radio channels began to reach Turkish viewers. As a result, the broadcasting system experienced a series of rapid and radical changes. By the beginning of 1993, there were almost 500 local commercial radio stations and 100 local television stations operating without licences. The government was faced with little choice: as the private radio and television channels had won the hearts of the nation, there was little else that could be done but to legalise the de facto pirates» (Çapli, 1998).

As a result of the increasing number of private television stations, radios and print media, content aspects came under the public eye and their quality was questioned. Today, poor content of media is still under discussion in Turkey, as tabloidization and infotainment became a major trend for those private media in a competitive environment. This was particularly the case of television, where very few programmes were considered to qualify as fine in terms of content quality. The print media followed very similar developments. Issues around women were the major «material», with some sections in newspapers devoted to pictures of naked women.

There were various reasons behind such tabloidization in media. The 1980 military coup brought about a major «depolitization» process that ended almost all political activities and organizations, and restricted freedom of expression. The public was discouraged from discussing politics and encouraged to focus more on other issues, related to popular culture, such as fashion and especially religion. Another important issue was sports as football played a key role in keeping the masses busy.

They were all meant to be the antidote to leftist movements and their potential «danger». So tabloidization was intended for depolitization purposes and started a depolitization process stil at work today in Turkish media.

Depolitization and its two way effect, resulting first in tabloidization, then in tabloidization producing a growing depolitization, found their meaning in disseminating the ideology of consumerism, propagated by Özal during the 1980s (Oktay, 1993). New tabloid television formats appeared in discussion platforms: «Infotainment», «A la Turca style Big Brother Shows», «Televole Shows» (paparazzi and celebrity gossip shows with very little sports), and «Pop Star Shows» became the new tools of tabloidization in Turkish media. Parallel to this, the last pages of newspapers became an arena of male gaze where pictures of celebrities, naked women and affairs started taking place. In most newspapers, the third page was dedicated to family affairs, rape and cheating stories.

Besides the increasing number of private television stations, radios, newspapers and Internet in today's media landscape, the regulating structures in Turkey are considerably new. During the early 1990s, the main problem was that there was neither a law to regulate newly emergent private radio and television stations, nor a regulatory body to assign frequencies to private operators and hold them to their responsibilities. As a result of these developments, the State monopoly over broadcasting, limited to public radios and televisions only, was abondoned in 8 August 1993. The Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) was established by the Radio and Television Law (law 3984) in 20 April 1994 in order to regulate private broadcasting and to ensure the compliance of the broadcast contents with the legal framework. «RTÜK is granted with the authority of giving penalties to the broadcasters for breaching the legal framework which may range from warning to the suspension of the TV and radio channels» (European Journalism Centre, 2008). The Supreme Council is composed of 9 members who are elected by the Grand National Assembly. According to the Directorate General of Press and Information, the main duties and powers of RTÜK can be listed as follows: «Granting license to the radio and television enterprises, allocation of channel and frequency bands, issuing licenses for the construction and operation of telecommunication facilities and monitoring the compliance of radio and television broadcasts with regard to the national and international legislation, deciding on the relevant sanctions in cases of violation of the provisions of the Law, conducting or commissioning public opinion surveys in order to determine the reactions of the public, representing the State at the organizations that have legal personality under international law, and are concerned with radio and television broadcasts» (BYEGM, 2008).

As can be seen from the definition of the responsibilities of RTÜK, it is a regulatory body with very limited educational purposes. It is only recently that activities related with media education and media literacy have been taking place, under the supervision of the institution.

Historically, media education has been limited to media professionals and can be equated to professional training, as well as education in schools of communications

at universities in Turkey that tend to produce professionals in public relations, journalism or marketing. The main national organizations providing training for media professionals, apart from the Directorate General of Press and Information as part of the Office of the Prime Minister, are the Turkish Sports Writers' Association, the Journalists Association of Turkey and, BÝA-Independent Communication Network. In addition to them, the European Journalism Centre and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation have been active in training professionals for media. Especially, the Local Media Training Project, under the supervision of the Journalists Association of Turkey and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, between 1997 and 2002, has been very significant in helping journalists cover local news in almost all cities of Turkey. BÝA-Independent Communication Network, an independent non governmental organization, has also been active in local media training in the last years. In addition to local media training, BÝA provides programmes, projects and workshops on minorities, human rights, children rights, women, gay and lesbian issues, freedom of expression, identity, animal rights and other issues related with media. At the same time, BÝA is very active in media monitoring and it serves also as a media watchdog. Because of the opening of the media sector and the increase in technological supplies, there is a great need for media training for professionals in Turkey. One of media education's task is to address the growing need for proper qualifications of those working for «252 television enterprises, including 23 national, 16 regional and 213 local channels; 1090 radio enterprises including 36 national, 102 regional and 952 local channels» (BYEGM, 2008). This need is increasingly being extended to news produced by Internet content providers, be it at local or national level.

Besides providing media training to professionals, the other major media education task is to address the media literacy needs of the population at large. According to a survey made in 2005 for Turkcell (a Turkish communication service company with 35.1 million subscribers as of 31 March 2008), 10% of the population has access to the Internet with an average use of 62 minutes. The main reason for using Internet is chatting, surfing, playing games and emailing. Average television viewing time length is 3 hours during weekdays and 3 hours and 23 minutes during weekends. The study also indicates that 23% of Turks never read newspapers, while 15% read them once a week or less. These indicators point to a great need for media literacy and media training of the public, as there seems to be a lack of concern for critical thinking and for quality news and focus on tabloid contents and entertainment services.


## 3. The Global Media Literacy Debate and How It Has Been Received in Turkey

Today, Turkey doesn't escape globalization via the media. Information about the world comes not only by words on a piece of paper but, increasingly, through the powerful images and sounds of global multimedia culture. Like many societies, Turkish society is exposed to hundreds –even thousands– of images and ideas not only from television but also from numerous websites, movies, radio, magazines, e-mails, video games, music, cell phone messages, billboards, and more. Media no longer just shapes

Turkish culture —they are actually full part of Turkish culture (Thoman & Jolls, 2004: 18) and Turkish culture doesn't resist it as much as other nations in the Middle East or the Arab world because of its lay tradition, inherited from Atatürk, that doesn't have a strict taboo about images and their attendant technologies. Especially, it can even be stated that there is a «Turkish wave» in the MENA region: some of the Arab and Middle East countries, such as Saudi Arabia and Lebanon, use Turkish television productions. According to sources in those countries, those productions score the highest in ratings. Apparently, Turkey and its projected image are a kind of model for the public in those countries.

In Turkey, as elsewhere, the messages conveyed by media are time-consuming. These messages try to capture the public's attention to catch them in the media flow. This media flow has a vested interest in connection time, as it is the main means it has of paying for itself and making profits. So the increased time Turkish people spend with online and offline media is of interest to global media companies, as it places Turkey on a similar ranking to media-rich Western countries. In this context, the prime concern of policy-makers should be to ensure that Turkish society is well prepared for these messages that surround it, especially young people who are born into it. Can they read and understand the language of pictures, sounds, special effects, images of mass media, and create meanings from them and for themselves?

Within this environment of mass media, media literacy thus needs to be defined. It is defined in different ways in Turkey as elsewhere as this debate of definition is raging among scholars and policy-makers. Some scholars define media literacy from a «media» point of view while some others define it in a «literacy» perspective. At the same time, some scholars focus on the «process» aspect of media literacy compared to its «content» aspect while defining its purpose. But, all agree on one point, which is the necessity of media literacy, especially for children. Media literacy is related to verbal, oral and visual texts. As noted by Thoman and Jolls (2004), it is characterized by the principle of inquiry, which means internalizing and learning to ask important questions about what you see, hear, and read. Essentially, media literacy underlines the importance of critical thinking on problems. It is a mental structuring on identifying concepts, multi-modal thinking, questioning and formulating of causes and effects. These are all fundamental skills for exercising full citizenship in a democratic society (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2003). They are just as crucial for counterbalancing some of the potentially alienating dimensions of media culture, as denounced by Silverblatt (2004).

Rushkoff (1996) defines the youth generation surrounded by mass media, video games and Internet as «screen-agers» because their media use is not only determined with the way they consume contents and texts, it is also defined with how they (inter)act and establish contact via screens. This underscores why media literacy plays an important role in learning and questioning content and context in a global media environment. According to what Rushkoff defines, children are not necessarily passive in their interaction with the media surrounding them. They are passive as consumers but they are actually active because they are the ones shaping new media and their

culture according to their expectations. By this definition, children become the reproducers and shapers of media culture. They can be passive because they are not critical, but they are active because of their reproducer role. The awareness level of children in this new media culture is therefore the important point to focus upon, especially in Turkey, where children are receiving Turkish content and content coming from other cultures they don't necessarily understand (the United States, Europe, Japan and others). Turkish children, in this fast developing media environment, are usually not well prepared to question the elements of their ambient media culture (images, video, text, interactivity and more). For all these reasons, media literacy is not an issue to be postponed to tomorrow or the future. It is an immediate need, especially for children. With the growing demands of today's complex political conditions, rapidly changing cultures, identity and citizenship issues, media literacy has to be the prime focus of adults concerned with well-being and good development of today's children.

In response to the societal demands of adults and due to the pressure of all the national and international factors, the Turkish university researchers and practitioners in this field propose some opinions for shaping the common debate for moving ahead in media literacy. These opinions all come from preliminary basic tenets about the functioning of media. First, media are made of constructions. The sounds, pictures, words and visual effects that individuals see and hear are the bricks of those constructions. Accordingly, media content and context are always manufactured constructions. What society expects to see on screens as cultural products are not realities but versions of realities shaped by a certain viewpoint. So, the first, expected question is «Who created this message?» Looking at production values as the bricks of those constructions is not enough, however. There are also additional elements to attract audiences, as exemplified by today's infotainment, music, special effects and tabloid news. As part of cultural artefacts, these can also be considered as tools for manipulation. So the second expected question is «How are people attracted to this media construction in terms of content and context?». Media constructions are also commonly regarded as cultural artefacts that carry certain viewpoints according to experiences, ideologies, prejudices, etc. That is why media messages can be understood and interpreted differently within different cultures. Within a multicultural society like Turkey, this becomes an important concern. In relation to this concern, the third expected question has to be «How do different people from different cultures or from different backgrounds understand and interpret the same message?». All the varying viewpoints are the results of values. The messages individuals feel fine about because of their own values may not make other people feel the same way. As a result, the fourth expected question is «What kind of values are reinforced or challenged through this media construction?». The fifth question is related to the first one, and interrogates the characteristics of the source that produces the media construction. If the issue is media construction and its content, «What is the reason that motivates the source?». The reason can be educational, ideological, religious or commercial. One of the main discussions about media constructions is thus related to their attachment to mainstream ideologies as they try to stimulate social reality (Aufderheide, 1993: 2).

Constructions serving the interest of mainstream and majority groups apparently ignore diffuse minorities and different voices and identities. Raising awareness about the source, its motivation and its construction of contents is an important dimension of media education in a democratic society, as media should be addressing all citizens, not only the elites or mainstream majorities. As a result, the additional and last question should be «Why is this message sent to me?».

According to Varis (2005), the very first step to a critical approach of media constructions is to be able to access media and their productions. Analyzing these productions and evaluating them are the next steps. In terms of being critical to media, responding and communicating is also necessary. Most importantly, involving people in media is considered as the last step; it is necessary in terms of pluralism and representations. Varis significantly defines all these necessities as the «empowerment spiral» that stresses the importance of «participation».

The global debate in media education clearly calls for media literacy policies. According to Masterman (1997), media education focuses on representations in media constructions. «The central and unifying concept of media education is representation». It considers media constructions as representations, not as reflecting realities. Another important point for media education, according to Masterman, is the purpose of media education. It aims to «denaturalize the media» and «challenges the naturalness of media images» by questioning them. In terms of values attached to those constructions, «media education is investigative» and «it does not seek to impose specific cultural values». It can be also understood as «being for others, their values, and their identities». In terms of media education's use, it is not supposed to be planned for a certain period of time only. It should be, and actually it is, a lifelong process, a continuing process. Through this process, «the effectiveness of media education has to be evaluated» (Masterman, 1997).

Another aspect in media education is to determine the ways of teaching media literacy. According to Hobbs (1994), there are three possible ways to teach media literacy as part of media education. The first one is learning with media. It involves access to media, analyzing it, evaluating, communicating and responding, and participation. The second one is teaching about media. It includes constructivist and deconstructivist approaches, such as using semiotics to reflect on the potential influences of media. The third one is a more student-active method. Students produce media to evaluate and participate. They create workshop environments and gather experience on information technologies, video and audio elements.

## 4. Media Literacy within Media Education in Turkey

Within this global context and Turkey's own historical evolution in the last two decades, media literacy and media education can be considered as a fairly new field. The school year 2006-07 was the first time in the history of the Turkish educational system that, «media literacy» programmes were made apparent in the curriculum. As part of this new step, media literacy courses for 6th, 7th and 8th graders became an

elective course. If one analyzes the history of media literacy and related work in Turkey, the role of the regulatory body, the Supreme Council (RTÜK) is crucial. The first time RTÜK discussed the issue of media literacy was during the Communication Symposium of 20-21 February 2003. Besides this interest in media literacy, RTÜK, conducted research in the areas of media effects and the role of media in public opinion. Historically, RTÜK's research areas heavily focus on language use in TVs and radios, television watching habits of children, general public's television viewing habits, radio listening habits, television news, women and television, television watching habits of Turkish immigrants living in Germany, and television watching habits of the disabled (RTÜK, 2006). Historically thus, they mainly focused on the effects of media, but not on media literacy and media education. The shift from effects to media literacy was possible because one of the significant factors for these studies was the way they reflected on «use» of media and also, in some aspect, on the public's awareness level on media use.

Starting from year 2000, RTÜK finalized its work on «Smart Signs» for protecting children from negative effects of media, particularly from television. «Smart Signs» were meant to be a guidance system for parents who wanted to protect their children from harmful content on television. In addition to this new development, the more recent project of RTÜK was about Internet use. The project was called «Internet Security for Our Children». Similar to smart signs for television, a smart filter system was provided to parents on RTÜK Children's Web Site (www.rtukcocuk.org.tr). Within this site, there are also children friendly programmes, films, texts and animations. It aims to help children for media literacy. Some of the sections' names are «RTÜK», «Smart Signs», «Children Rights», «What to Watch» and «TV Reader». Most of the contents within these sections are aimed at children with limited media use and media knowledge. While RTÜK was producing these projects, some schools (Misak-ý Milli Primary School, Ýhsan Doðramacý Foundation Private Bilkent Primary School, Türkiye Emlak Bankasý Primary School) from Ankara cooperated within the projects as partners.

Besides these developments, the first media literacy conference took place on 23-25 May 2005. Organized by the School of Communications in Marmara University, Istanbul, it produced a publication collecting 30 presented papers, «Medya Okuryazarlýðý» compiled by Nurçay Türkoðlu, Melda Cinman Þimþek, Kalmeus Yayýnlarý, in 2007. Interestingly, the publication shows that there are almost no empirical studies directly related to media literacy and media education in Turkey. The conference was mostly devoted to discussions about concepts in media literacy and education, and it was trying to reflect the importance and necessity of media literacy and media education for Turkey. Actually, as part of the closing remarks, the conference and attendant publication suggested the immediate need for media literacy courses for children in Turkey.

In addition to the conference's significant contribution, the Anti Violence Platform created by related government establishments, RTÜK, NGOs and universities, as part of Ministry of State in 2004, also declared the necessity of media literacy courses

in schools. According to these suggestions, the Ministry of Education prepared a draft course content and teacher's manuals (RTÜK, 2007). It also actively participated in the Council of Europe's conference on «Empowering Young People» in Armenia (Council of Europe, 2006), and completed the translation in Turkish of the Council of Europe's «Handbook on Internet Literacy» and of Unesco's «Media Education» kit (2007). Turkey thus has been developing its own tools but has also shown eagerness in connecting itself to similar evolutions happening in the enlarged Europe and in the world.

RTÜK also organized the International Media Literacy Panel in Ankara, on 24 November 2006. It may be considered as the last step before the RTÜK and the Ministry of Education's joint initiative for a media literacy programme in schools starting in the 2006-07 school year. «Media Literacy» courses made their appearance soon after. To attract the students, but also the parents, to this elective course, RTÜK prepared a promotional Media Literacy demo film. The film was shown on many national television channels. According to the Commission responsible for the preparation of the programme and the course book, the programme is designed from a constructivist viewpoint. Most importantly, the Commission's Report indicates that some other learning objectives of this programme involve gaining «new skills» and «new values» besides the main framework and objects of the programme (Komisyon, 2007). The general objectives of the media literacy programme are defined so that each child: «Reads the media from different angles while being sensitive to surrounding, knowing the problems of country, and gains conscious on what is presented in media. Accesses the messages in television, video, cinema, commercials, print media, Internet and etc; analyzes, evaluates and communicates these messages. Gains a critical viewpoint for print, visual and aural media. Brings an agenda of finding answers and providing questions as parallel to creating and analyzing messages. Becomes a conscious media literate. Actively participates in social life. Provides support for awareness on development of public and private broadcasting».

To reach such objectives, eight primary units take place within «Elective Media Literacy Course Teaching Programme». They are: «introduction to communication» «mass communication», «media», «television», «family, children and television», «radio», «newspapers and magazines», and «Internet». In order to put the programme in practice, five cities and one primary school from each city were selected as sample ones. Those schools were Seyhan Dumlupýnar Primary School from Adana, Çankaya Ahmet Vefik Paþa Primary School from Ankara, Merkez Barbarso Hayrettin Paþa Primary School from Erzurum, Bakýrköy Þehit Pilot Muzaffer Erdönmez Primary School from Istanbul, and Karþýyaka METAÞ Primary School from Izmir.

The choice of teachers responsible from Media Literacy courses is revealing of the challenges for decision-makers, especially as training courses for initial in-service training of teachers are not yet put in place. In these sample schools, social sciences teachers were selected to teach these courses. During four days (7-10 September 2006), 20 social sciences teachers from those schools took the «Training the Trainers» programme in Ankara. According to the initial observations of the Ministry of Education

and RTÜK experts (RTÜK, 2007), there was widespread interest for this Media Literacy course. There was a need for more detailed course programme in terms of providing more active and effective communication. It was suggested that teaching this course at the first level of primary education in relation to other courses would be better. It was observed that children were active in using RTÜK's website prepared for children. Establishing Media Clubs at schools would attract students to choose this elective course. It was also observed that children were sharing course content with their families and there was a significant change for families in the way they perceived reality and considered their media preferences. The course content was effective on their behaviour and it was observed that they were more selective in watching television programmes and aware of their choices. School children's visits to media organizations and use of role models for analyzing media products would also be effective ways of producing intended results. As an outcome of these observations and developments, the «Media Literacy Course Teacher's Manual» was produced by the Commission in 2007. However, one important missing point in the report is how the research was conducted and how the related observations were connected to the results in attitudinal change of the students and their families. Gathering data and analyzing data methods are not clear, and reports mainly seem to rely on unsystematic observation, which calls for more research on evaluation and effectiveness of impact.

Besides these important developments in media literacy, RTÜK's ongoing conferences play an important role to attract audiences and to help people related with this field to exchange information and build communities of practice. In 2008, several national and international conferences for media literacy and media education were planned in Turkey. Monitoring meetings of RTÜK also take place in different cities for the project. For RTÜK, these activities aim to monitor the projects developments and outcomes, and to see possible opportunities to apply new approaches.

All these positive aspects show a pro-active attitude in regulatory entities, in connection with other actors, like foundations, teachers and NGOs. Yet, one of the biggest problems for media in Turkey today remains the poor content. There is still considerable amount of tabloidization and «televoleism» (gossip and celebrity oriented paparazzi programmes) in media, both in print and visual formats. The Internet situation is even more ambiguous. On the one hand, most online content is without filter in most of the cases when harmful content can hurt young people, on the other hand, access to some Internet websites for public interest is impossible in some cases, as state censorship is applied to some issues because of their relation to «Anti-State» practices, «illegal organizations» and «attacks on the honour of Ataturk and Turkish nation». Today, there are ongoing protest movements, email chains and special campaigns on Internet for those kinds of practices. These are organized by web-based established groups, such as Facebook groups or Twitter groups.

At the same time, it is apparent that media literacy and media education projects are just starting. As it can be seen in local media trainings by Journalists Association of Turkey and Konrad Adenauer Foundation, professional cooperations at the international level also need to be considered as a way for scaling up rapidly and for

involving Turkey in the international community. There are very few university professors who had a chance to get media education outside Turkey. Historically, the Radio Netherlands Training Centre was one of the institutions providing media education to professionals from Turkey in the Netherlands.

Besides international cooperation for media professionals, there is no extension to children and school. At this point, media literacy relies on a school-based uni-dimensional programme. Another important dimension to consider for media literacy development is the way course contents and materials are created. In the existing manuals, some of the chapters do not have apparent or clear learning outcomes. Most of them are knowledge-based, which is understandable because of the level of school children. But considerations for competences and citizen-oriented outputs need to be introduced for children in higher grades. For them, the media roles in relation to human rights, minorities, religion, identities, culture, values, global and local, freedom of expression, accession to European Union, and current issues of the world can be considered as possible subjects.

Today, there is a growing need for critical understanding and critical questioning of media in Turkey. Also, there is also a need for deeper assessment of the outcomes of the existing media literacy and media education projects. As part of the first initiatives, 350.000 students (out of a total of 14.115.892, according to the Ministry of Education) benefited from media literacy projects (Çelik, 2008). It is apparent that there will be more and more school children demanding for the course and courses similar to this. Graduates from schools of communications can be considered as potential media literacy teachers at schools. Professional media, universities and non-governmental organizations can be more active in media literacy projects. These counterparts can be assigned responsibilities by the media regulating authorities.

## 5. Conclusion

Media literacy and media education in Turkey are still concepts in their developing stages. Only 2 years have elapsed since the very first media literacy course was included into educational system of primary school children. Compared to the progress of some other countries, there are still lessons to be learned and necessary changes to make. In these efforts, schools should not be the only sources for building bridges. Local authorities, non-governmental organizations, professional media organizations, universities and regulating bodies should be involved.

Efforts by the Ministry of Education and RTÜK are significant. At the same time, democratization, pluralism, diversity, identity, women, handicapped and other disadvantaged groups, and their relation to media should also be considered by content and programme providers. Media literacy and media education can be seen as a beneficial tool to discuss and question the ongoing media environment without creating havoc, mistrust and with peace, tolerance and civic agency in mind.

Media literacy and media education have recently become part of department

programmes of communication schools in Turkey. They can be used in all schools of communications. At the same time, media literacy and media education can be also considered as a responsibility of curriculum development programmes in schools of education. These two sectors of education and communication should come together to put their communities of practice in common.

As last, Turkey, with its projects in media literacy and media practices, can be a significant example for countries around the region. As it was indicated, Arab and Middle East countries show a growing demand for Turkish media productions, especially television programmes. This kind of already established relationship can also be used for establishing cooperation towards international projects within media literacy and media education programmes.

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# 5. Exploring Media Education as Civic Praxis in Africa

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ABSTRACT

This contribution argues that African media education must define a pedagogical agenda for citizenship. That task lies in a postcolonial revisionism of liberal modes of thought and practice about media. This neo-colonial dependence of African media education is evident in the pedagogical emphasis on professional-journalistic automation. However, Africans are increasingly becoming politically and civically apathetic. This article calls for an emancipatory vision of journalism that is embedded in civil society. It uses a case study of radio listening clubs to illustrate the civic influence of the media in Malawi and Zambia. It concludes by proposing a model of media education for citizenship. The key tenets of the model include enhancing critical analysis of the correlation between media, democracy and development; developing an emancipatory vision of journalism; cultivating an active citizenship; entrenching a viable institutional infrastructure of democracy; and promoting an informed adherence to human rights.

KEY WORDS

Citizenship, civil society, civic culture, emancipatory journalism, human rights, media education, ethics, Africa, identity, curriculum, development.

## 1. Introduction

*Media education in Africa is carried on within the strictures of Western ontology and epistemology. More particularly, it is characterised by the liberal journalistic epistemic orientation which privileges dispassionate media work over civically active media practice. But not all is lost; it is becoming increasingly patent that there is a discursive pedagogical questioning of the received wisdom from Western academe. This marks the postcolonial project in which a cadre of African media scholars is beginning to invest its energy (Banda, 2008; Wasserman, 2006).

But this postcolonial project is occurring on the fringes of established media education –in the trenches of civil society formations. Perhaps this is understandable: professional and academic programmes are established within the Western framework of liberal philosophical values and practices. There is, however, within the Western professional and academic establishment, a tendency towards civic journalism (Rosen, 1999). This movement is indicative of a post-objective journalism that inscribes a variety of journalistic subjectivities, including civic journalism, community journalism, peace journalism, etc. In Africa, discussions of media ethics, in particular, have resulted in an appropriation and reinterpretation of modes of civic and communitarian journalism within the context of African culture (Banda, 2008; Wasserman, 2006; Christians, 2004).

Inter-governmental organisations, such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), are more actively embracing forms of media training and education that are aimed at cultivating engaged and engaging citizenship. Such a form of media training encapsulates aspects of journalism as a socially constructed practice that can be utilised in the service of civic education. This trend is evident in other sectors of national and international civil society. Clearly, such approaches to journalism are invoking human agency as an integral part of the practice of journalistic investigation. It is this human agency that fundamentally underpins the kind of media education for citizenship that is of interest to Africa.

This analysis, then, seeks to answer the following research questions:

- What is the context in which media education for citizenship could make its debut?
- What is the nature of such media education for citizenship?
- What case studies are there to demonstrate such a typology of media education?
- What model of media education for citizenship can be proposed for Africa?

A key assumption here is that it is possible to assert a postcolonial educational agenda that fundamentally rejects or revises Western liberal forms of media training and education and replaces them with a media education that is embedded within the concept of citizenship.

## 2. The Context of Media Education For Citizenship

African media education has a tripartite character. It owes some of its identity to its colonial interpenetration. It also identifies with the postcolonial character of African

society, characterised by the postcolonial state's indelible imprint of national unity and development on media curricula. A third, rather amorphous, identity of African media education is traceable to the age associated with the globalisation of communication, noticeable from the 1990s onwards. Here, media education seems to have lost its postcolonial historical-ideological encasing, increasingly linked to its economic value in the employment marketplace. This neo-liberal feature of media education has meant an even greater emphasis on technical skills, as opposed to critical engagement. This has had implications for the status and role of the citizen in the African body politic.

It is important at this point to trace the historical development of modern civic culture in Africa. We can pinpoint two historical phases. Firstly, the liberation struggle from colonialism could be seen as having contributed towards enhancing the civic culture of Africans, seeing themselves as politically competent to take over the reins of power from imperialistic colonisers. This is evident from the 1950s and 1960s, or even earlier in the case of South Africa's African National Congress (ANC).

Secondly, the renewed interest in citizenship rights and freedoms can also be traced to the 1990s. This is largely because of the democratic deficiencies of postcolonial one-party states in what was referred to as the «second liberation». The term «second liberation» is used by scholars to underscore the betrayed hopes surrounding the liberation from colonial rule in the 1960s (Diamond & Plattner, 1999). In South Africa, the end of the apartheid regime became a rallying point for vigorous debates about a renewal of citizenship in the aftermath of the democratic elections of April 1994.

For some, the 1990s presented an opportunity to celebrate «the rebirth of African liberalism», such as the rise of constitutionalism, the flourishing of civil society, the comeback of parliaments, and the trend toward liberalization, as examples of the institutionalisation of democracy on the continent (Gyimah-Boadi, 1999).

One outcome of the reintroduction of democratic politics was the emergence of a stronger civil society. According to Bratton, civic actors in Africa derived new-found energy from the climate of political liberalisation in the 1990s. There is considerable evidence that previously closed political space was occupied by genuine manifestations of civil society, namely by structures of associations, networks of communication, and norms of civic engagement (Bratton, 1994).

However, after the initial euphoria, there seems to be a decline in political participation across Africa. This is consistent with the Afrobarometer studies (2002). For example, while 69 percent of Africans interviewed say that democracy is «always preferable», only 58 percent say that they are satisfied with democracy's performance. An interesting finding for Africa is that about 89 percent of the people interviewed isolate «improvements in the socioeconomic sphere» as the most important feature of a democratic society, underscoring the importance of the socioeconomic base of citizenship.

This civic apathy calls for a questioning of the liberal-democratic notion of politics in general and the liberal-democratic underpinning of journalism and media. Such a

critical questioning can be politically justified in terms of postcolonial theory. It is clear that Africa's education in general continues to be dependent on Western systems of philosophy and knowledge, largely because of the imposition of colonialism and its postcolonial legacy. As Edward W. Said argued: «Europe reconstituted abroad, its 'multiplication space' successfully projected and managed. The result was a widely varied group of little Europes, scattered throughout Asia, Africa, and the Americas, each reflecting the circumstances, the specific instrumentalities of the parent culture, its pioneers, its vanguard settlers» (Serequeberhan, 2002: 66).

One of the «instrumentalities» used by the imperial nations to «civilise» the natives was education. Its cultural foundations were those of the imperial nations, uprooting the natives from their own histories, epistemologies and ontologies. African media education thus reflects Western forms of media training and education. This form of neocolonial dependency, underpinned by the political economy of the existing political and economic relations between the former colonisers and the former colonies, had already been signalled by Kwame Nkrumah. The notion of «neocolonialism» emphasises the fact that the continuing relationships between the coloniser and the colonised resulted in the creation of client states, independent in name but in point of fact pawns of the very colonial power that is supposed to have given them independence. Nkrumah pointed out that «the independence of those states is in name only; for their liberty of action is gone» (Thomson, 1969: 273).

## 2.1. The Need for a Postcolonial Critique of Media Education in Africa

Although this analysis is not about postcolonial theory per se, it must be noted that postcolonial theory facilitates a process of deconstructing the Western, liberal moorings of contemporary African media education.

A key aim of postcolonial theory is to recover the lost historical and contemporary voices of the marginalized, the oppressed, and the dominated, through a radical reconstruction of history and knowledge production (McEwan, 2002: 128). In this way, the postcolonial project becomes what Ngugi wa Thiong'o, a Kenyan novelist, refers to as «decolonizing the mind» (Banda, 2008: 83). For wa Thiong'o, then, recovering this history means bringing back to Africa «its economy, its politics, its culture, its languages and all its patriotic writers» (Parker & Starkey, 1995: 4).

Postcolonial theory is increasingly being appropriated to advance a range of different intellectual and political projects (Banda, 2008: 83). Young puts it forcefully: «What makes a politics postcolonial is a broader shared political philosophy that guides its ethics and its practical aims. Postcolonialism as a political philosophy (…) stands for empowering the poor, the dispossessed, and the disadvantaged, for tolerance of difference and diversity, for the establishment of minorities' rights, women's rights, and cultural rights within a broad framework of democratic egalitarianism that refuses to impose alienating Western ways of thinking on tricontinental societies» (as cited in Banda, 2008: 83-84).

The subversive nature of postcolonial theory lends itself to alternative ways of thinking and acting. As such, it allows for the emergence of an epistemological and

ontological politics (Banda, 2008: 84). Within the context of media and communication, then, it can be argued that postcolonial theory has «revitalized the space of communication and media studies by placing issues of race, gender, nation, citizenship and sexuality at theoretical centre-stage. Both in terms of theory and method, there is a conscious commitment to addressing the problematics of Western modernity together with the politics of knowledge production. In addition to its intellectual appeal, the pliability of postcolonial cultural studies lies in its refusal to adopt a language of universalization, a resolute insistence on local specificity and a self-conscious articulation of speaking positions» (Hegde, 2005: 60).

Postcolonial theory is relevant to African media education because, firstly, the institution of mass media is implicated in the colonial, postcolonial, and neocolonial experiences of African countries. Secondly, whereas global theories of the media and international communication often emphasize the utopian and liberating effect of the media, these theories simultaneously obscure deep divisions and inequities brought about by slavery and colonialism. Postcolonial theory is thus concerned with explaining the historical impact of colonialism on, inter alia, knowledge production, power, and gender. It also seeks to lay bare the fact that African media are still embedded in the international media structure. Thirdly, postcolonial theory presents African media studies with an explicit intellectual and political injunction to «de-Westernize» media studies in favour of Afrocentric knowledge and understanding of African media. Postcolonial analysis thus serves to transgress Western analytical categories of African media cultures (Banda, 2008: 84).

Against this postcolonial background, then, it is possible to mount a critique of contemporary African media education and propose a normative framework that reflects the specific historico-cultural condition of the African continent.

### 2.1.1. «Banking Education»

The neocolonial context of media education is evident throughout Africa. A review of most media education curricula reflects the «circuit of culture» framework adopted for the teaching of journalism and media studies in most Western institutions of higher learning, especially British ones. The so-called «circuit of culture» embraces the cultural moments of «production, identity, representation, consumption and regulation» (DuGay, Hall, Janes, Mackay & Negus, 1997) and how they articulate in the process of media-making.

While the circuit of culture provides a reasonably good framework for analysing the lived experiences and meanings associated with journalism and media across cultures, its analytical and contextual categories are generally alienating to some African media educators (Kasoma, 1996). Most such analytical categories exhibit Western cultural biases on a range of human-societal issues. For example, production is circumscribed within a hierarchical, regimented institutional structure that is founded on the libertarian commercialist and consumerist cultural values (Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Herman & McChesney, 1997).

As a consequence, most African media education has borne the instrumentalist brunt of Western educational philosophy, stressing the speedy production of graduates to staff profit-seeking media conglomerates. In Zambia, for example, the Department of Mass Communication's programme seems to be mostly focused on «practical training, technical and professional performance», reflecting the programme's American professional-ideological leanings (Wimmer & Wolf, 2005: 11).

Largely as a result of the paucity of indigenised theoretical knowledge about media, most media education in Africa tends to emphasise the practical components of their curricula. The theory taught is Western-oriented, usually uncritically packaged together with the journalistic skills imparted. It is not contextualised theory that challenges the very Western-theoretical moorings of media education (Hochheimer, 2001). Very often, the theory that is embedded in this packaged media education is that of journalists as «watchdogs» over their governments.

The instrumentalism typical of most media courses means that there is greater emphasis on practical exercises. The emphasis is on fitting the students for industry specifications. As noted in the case of Zambia, this was a particularly American liberal influence, perpetuated through educational grants and scholarship schemes provided by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), especially at the height of political transformation in the early 1990s.

Regurgitating such received Western knowledge of media structures and practices amounts to the a-political and uncritical practice of «banking education» (Freire, 1985: 2). Freire's notion of «conscientisation», which stresses respect for local cultural identity, empowerment and participation, is generally appropriated in the context of participatory media education in Africa (Banda, 2003).

### 2.1.2 «Pedagogy of the Oppressed»

Amidst such a neo-liberal, free-market approach to media education via journalism schools, there are some dissenting voices both within Western and African academe. For example, the acknowledgement of African «ubuntuism» by Western scholars like Christians (2004) is indicative of a growing scholarly agenda, across the globe, for reconceptualising journalism within the «ethics of engagement», in which journalists are equipped to carry out their moral responsibilities (Plaisance, 2002: 213). Plaisance's article «The Journalist as Moral Witness» (Plaisance, 2002) is particularly illustrative of the moral agency imputed to the journalist.

It is for this reason that there have been calls for «de-Westernising» media studies (Fourie, 2007), so that its analytical content or categorisation can reflect the specificity of African cultures and invoke the moral agency of African journalists. Questions of production, identity, representation, consumption and regulation can be framed in terms of community-based notions of production, identity, representation, consumption and regulation. It is for this reason that Kasoma (1996) advocates for the much-criticised notion of «Afriethics», locating media within the traditional cultures of African societies (Banda, 2008; Wasserman, 2006).

This «pedagogy of the oppressed», a postcolonial project, is clearly signposted by Paulo Freire (1985: 14-15) when he asserts that: «Literacy then becomes a global task involving illiterate learners in their relationships with the world and with others. But in understanding this global task and based on their experience, learners contribute to their own ability to take charge as actors of the task –the praxis. And significantly, as actors they transform the world with their work and create their own world. This world, created by the transformation of another world they did not create and that now restrains them, is the cultured world that stretches out into the world of history. Similarly, they understand the creative and regenerative meaning of their transformative work. They discover a new meaning as well… Thus they come to appreciate that this new thing, a product of their efforts, is a cultural object».

Clearly, by engaging in a postcolonial critique of the kind of Western pedagogy that emphasises the dispassionate role of the journalist, African media educators will be generating their own words and language for describing and analysing the media condition in Africa. This is an act of culture, liberating and empowering. It requires an analysis of the nature of media education for citizenship both within and beyond the boundaries of journalism schools.

## 3. The Nature of Media Education for Citizenship: From «Mediaship» to Citizenship

African media education continues to look to the West for its legitimation (Banda, Beukes-Amiss, Bosch, Mano, McLean and Steenveld, 2007). In part, this issue is implicated in the politics and economics of knowledge production. African media educators have few or no resources to generate indigenised knowledge. Whenever such knowledge is produced, it has to be legitimised by Western institutions through funding, peer review, and other similar academic validation processes. While there is a case to be made about the globality of knowledge production, distribution and consumption, Africa does not seem to have attained the levels of economic self-sufficiency that are needed to assert its own epistemic and ontological independence and identity on the world stage.

As such, African media educators continue to reproduce Western systems of philosophy and classification, including the basic conceptual and practical categories of media studies. Here, it is perhaps worth mentioning that such Western received knowledge seems to elevate the media over and above the citizen. This corresponds to a process of «mediaship» –a process whereby African knowledge of the concepts and practices of media is governed by the dominance of worldviews generated by the media themselves, as opposed to those of the citizens.

It is becoming evident, nevertheless, that civil society formations are asserting an epistemic and ontological revolt. This is evident in the non-formal educational offerings by those non-governmental media-support organisations that recognise the potential role of media in promoting specific goals of democracy and development. These include gender equity advocates like the Federation of African Media Women in

Southern African Development Community (FAMW-SADC) and the Gender and Media Southern Africa (GEMSA) projects; media watchdogs like the Media Monitoring Project (MMP); as well as development-communication promoters like the Panos Institute.

What, then, is the nature of media education for citizenship? Fundamentally, it is located in the concept of citizenship. Here, a distinction needs to be made between what can be described as «liberal journalistic automation» and «communitarian civic autonomy».

### 3.1. Journalistic Automation

Locating media education within the framework of citizenship entails a post-colonial deconstruction of the liberal ontology of journalistic objectivity and replacing it with a communitarian epistemology of journalistic subjectivity. It calls for unmasking the journalistic automation that underpins most Western structural analyses of media. For example, in the context of alternative journalism, focus has shifted to rethinking the epistemology of news production within the classroom. As Atton (2003: 271) observes: «In their insightful and necessary challenge to journalism educators, Skinner et al… argue that the rote learning of news values by students has led to recognition of news that is craft-based and 'denies any relation to epistemology'. Instead they propose methods of journalism education that foreground questions of epistemology, emphasize the social construction of 'facts' and knowledge and develop critical thinking and reflexivity». Conventional journalism, trapped in the net of objectivity, cannot effectively counter tendencies towards the simplification of the otherwise complex modern-day body politic. An indictment against such automated journalism is cited by Lynch and McGoldrick (2005: 204): «Journalism's criteria of newsworthiness and factuality, and its routines of newsgathering anchored in bureaucratic institutions with designated spokespeople and prescheduled routines, are mutually constitutive. Taken together, they tend to ensure routine and privileged access for bureaucrats and agency officials, who provide the 'hard facts', credible claims and background information for Objective reporting».

### 3.2. Civic Autonomy

Media education for citizenship must promote journalistic civic autonomy. Journalistic autonomy can be understood in the expanded sense of personal and institutional freedom to practise journalism. In this way, it shifts responsibility to both individual journalists and media executives for decision-making. But, more importantly, while «practitioners clearly want to preserve their autonomy… The form and consequences of this professional orientation are not fixed» (McDevitt, 2003: 161). As such, journalistic (civic) autonomy affirms human and moral agency. Three key arguments can be made here.

Firstly, the kind of freedom envisioned by journalistic autonomy can be reconceptualised within the context of African media education. Hochheimer (2001:

110-111), reflecting on African journalism in particular, stretches this point in his conceptualisation of «journalism of meaning». According to him, such an approach would embed journalism curricula within the students' own historical, cultural and social experiences. The latter point agrees with Ali Mazrui's concern that Western based curricula, built on rationalist-scientific detachment, tend to uproot African students from their history and culture, making it difficult for them to engage in reflexivity and criticize their own governments from the vantage point of engaged and constructive citizenry (Murphy & Scotton, 1987: 18-20).

Secondly, the tendency towards resurrecting human agency in journalistic practice was indicative of the need, at least in the US, to reinvigorate journalists as conscious contributors to the health of public life and citizenship. As such, from the perspective of media practitioners themselves, the effect of media education for citizenship becomes one that emboldens students to seek actively the engagement of citizens in the process of public problem-solving. This critical tendency has opened up avenues for imagining «alternative» journalisms. As such, Atton (2003: 271) suggests that the study of alternative journalism can encapsulate: 1) a critique through praxis of institutionalised and routinised forms of journalism, 2) other ways of practising journalism, 3) skills and possibilities to those who might want to work in «citizens' media».

In this way, African media education would need to equip students with the existential and constructivist insights as to why journalistic autonomy should be directed towards civic activation. McDevitt notes that such a theoretical reformulation would need to contemplate three interrelated distinctions about news production, namely «journalism and the news media industry; autonomy versus objectivity; and autonomy as a resource for, or a barrier to, civic activation» (McDevitt, 2003: 161). Related to this could be an explicit acceptance of subjectivity as an important part of the practice of civic journalism.

Thirdly, the concept of «autonomy» needs to be clearly distinguished from that of «objectivity». The word autonomy seems to harbour three meanings, namely: 1) the quality or state of being self-governing, especially the right of self-government; 2) self-directing freedom and especially moral independence; 3) a self-governing state (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2008). In a sense, claiming professional autonomy would include acknowledging the subject position of the journalist.

All the above definitions are applicable to an Afrocentric re-conceptualisation of journalistic (civic) autonomy. Journalists must be imbued with a degree of self-governance or self-directing freedom. As human beings, they must be allowed to be morally independent. In the African context of «ubuntu», the quality of «moral independence» would be a key feature of journalistic independence. But one cannot be morally «independent» without being morally dependent on one's social relationships. One reason why objectivity, in the Western libertarian sense, has been attacked is because it seems to absolve journalists from moral responsibility (Bell, 1997).

The notion of an «interdependent morality» needs to be stressed as «the fundamental ontological and epistemological category in the African thought of the Bantu-speaking people» (Ramose, 2002: 230; Christians, 2004: 245). It is within this framework that African media education as a collective civic praxis can be considered. This view of journalistic autonomy allows for the exercise of personal freedom to analyse societal moral values and political choices in the context of the journalist's sense of politico-community belonging. As such, it is possible to conceive of civic activation as a collective moral value worthy of personal journalistic attachment.

However, this personal moral attachment does not mean that the journalist loses all sense of professional discipline. Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel (2001: 70-93) remind us about «the essence of journalism as a discipline of verification». They argue that the discipline of verification is what separates journalism from entertainment, propaganda, fiction, or art. To paraphrase Kovach and Rosenstiel, such discipline is based on accuracy, honesty, transparency, originality, and humility.

It is possible, given the above understanding of media education for citizenship, to isolate a case study which exemplifies some of the fundamental tenets of citizenship-enhancing media literacy.

## 4. Media Education as Civic Praxis: A Case Study

This case study is based on the radio listening clubs communication model piloted by Panos Southern Africa in Malawi and Zambia. The idea of listening groups goes back to a time when group listening was tried out as a method of adult education by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) in order to overcome the «one-way limitation of broadcasting». Group listening and «teleclubs» were also experimented with in France, Japan, Italy and India. In India, listening groups were first introduced to enhance the diffusion of messages from an All India Radio (AIR), a UNESCO sponsored experimental programme broadcast in rural areas. These groups played an important role in disseminating information by «transforming a passive audience into an active participant» and the improvements in awareness and knowledge were striking (Banda, 2007: 131).

This approach to engaging audiences in media production and consumption was replicated by the Lusaka-based Panos Southern Africa. The concept of «listening groups» is perhaps misleading. It suggests audience passivity –the clubs' role is merely to listen, within the context of organised groupings, to the programmes transmitted by the broadcasters. It masks audience participation in producing the programmes as well as in producing meaning and communicating it to other societal actors –the policymakers, ordinary citizens, etc. The clubs actually play a dual role, technically producing their own programmes and socially producing their own definitions or meanings of development. So while «listening» is, in itself, an objective of the clubs, there is a much more involved process of programme production. The label «radio listening clubs» was thus used in the extended sense of active audience engagement in the processes of media production, consumption and meaning-making.

The idea was based upon a basic philosophy of equipping the participants with technical and critical-analytical skills to enable them to both produce radio programmes and make sense of the context of media production. This was a more ideological-political objective of the project and could only happen through a process of critical media literacy. More specifically, the process of media literacy involved the following:

- Social mobilisation of rural women to set up radio listening clubs as platforms for political, economic and social transformation within their geographic locales;

- Training of the participants in technical aspects of radio production, such as placement of the audio-cassette recorder for maximum sound recording; voice projection, etc.; and

- Skills in social analysis, including how to analyse gender roles as opposed to sex roles. Arguably, this acted as a process of political conscientisation, introducing the participants to questions of political representation, gender, equity, justice, sustainable development, etc. (Banda, 2007: 132).

The more technical aspects of the project involved the participants doing audio-recordings of issues of community concern as initiated and discussed by the women themselves (e.g. agriculture, nutrition and balanced diets, gender equality, protection against HIV / AIDS, political rights and processes, the law of inheritance, traditional customs, care of children, care of orphans, education and its cost). They would then arrange for such recorded tapes to be transported to a central studio, in Lusaka (Zambia) or Blantyre (Malawi), to be used by the producers assigned to the Development-Through-Radio (DTR) project, as it came to be known. In some instances, the women arranged to have these recordings transported by long-distance bus drivers, whereupon the producer would collect them from the bus driver at an agreed place. This ingenuity was part of what had become a process of life-long learning and problem-solving –an ability to beat all the odds given the problems of under-development in Malawi and Zambia (Banda, 2007: 132).

In turn, the DTR producers at the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC) and the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) would record responses to the women's concerns from relevant urban-based policy-makers and / or NGO leaders. The producers would then edit both the women's recordings and the policy-makers' recordings into one 15-minute programme. The editing was of a technical nature, preserving the authenticity and integrity of the rural women's voices. Then the 15-minute programme would be transmitted on the two participating stations. The broadcast would engender more discussion, and hence more audiotape recordings for rebroadcast. This resulted in a form of cyclical dialogue (Banda, 2007: 132).

The project aimed to test the hypothesis that participatory broadcasting was more efficacious in promoting citizen engagement. While conventional radio broadcasting is generally seen as unidirectional, top-down and paternalistic, the introduction of radio listening clubs into the equation seemed to domesticate it into a participatory mode, particularly if the production of radio programmes became embedded, through media literacy, in the daily lived experiences of the citizens (Banda, 2007: 133).

The findings, reported in Banda (2007: 130-148), can be summarised in terms of the following conclusions:

• Participatory communication, as evidenced by the radio listening clubs, can be used as a process of social mobilisation to organise citizens into broad-based, multipurpose community structures aimed at enhancing their capacities to effectively plan and manage participatory and sustainable local development.

• The process of acquiring technical skills and critical knowledge became an act of empowerment for the rural women, building confidence in them to become active participants in their own development.

• The act of communal participation in the clubs motivated the members to listen to the radio, with the result that they became interested in other programmes of a developmental nature.

• Interpersonal influence became heightened as a consequence of the dynamics of social action within the groups.

• The clubs imputed organisational power to the participants such that they became a force for economic, political and other transformation both within their communities and nationally.

• The prospect of the mass audience was catalytic in the social cohesion characteristic of the club members, enabling them to envision themselves as citizens in the wider politics of the nation.

• The clubs promoted a dialogic exchange between the clubs and policymaking elites, enabling the rural women to converse, from a position of collective power, with those they would otherwise not meet in person.

The case study demonstrates three fundamental points. Firstly, media can be agents of socio-political transformation, whatever the pattern of ownership. In both cases, the broadcasting stations concerned are owned by the state. Secondly, media can enable people to envision what is possible beyond their geographical locality and sociological locale. By providing a platform for them to engage with one another, media empower people with the analytical tools and the practical skills to interact more successfully with their environment and extend their civic competence beyond their immediate environs. Thirdly, social movements can use media in the service of citizenship. Media educators can learn from this tripartite alliance by embedding media education within the context of the «interactions» between «social movements», «media» and «citizens».

## 5. Towards a Model of Media Education for Citizenship

At the core of media education for citizenship is an acceptance of the political, normative and visionary nature of media education. This takes into account the fact that media do not operate in a vacuum; they are implicated in the geographies, histories, politics and economics of cultural production. To politicise media education is to acknowledge its potential for autocratic repression and democratic liberation. As such, locating media education within the framework of citizenship lends it the potential for emancipation. As Henry Giroux (1980: 357-358) observes: «If citizenship education is to be emancipatory, it must begin with the assumption that its aim is not «to fit» students into existing society; instead, its primary purpose must be to stimulate their

passions, imaginations, and intellects so that they will be moved to challenge the social, political, and economic forces that weigh so heavily upon their lives. In other words, students should be educated to display civic courage, i.e., the willingness to act as if they were living in a democratic society. At its core, this form of education is political, and its goal is a genuine democratic society, one that is responsive to the needs of all and not just of a privileged few».

Africa is crafting its own democratic experience. This must be viewed as a postcolonial cultural exercise as much as it is an articulation of democracy on Africa's terms. Part of this exercise involves an articulation of what citizenship means. The public life of a democracy is centred in the citizen (Centre for Civic Education [CCE], 2006: 41). A postcolonial envisioning of citizenship must go beyond the instrumentalist-procedural approaches towards defining citizenship.

A useful way of framing the debate about citizenship is given by the CCE (2006: 39-46). The framework includes: 1) the status of the person in a political context; 2) the role of the person in various forms of political system; 3) the role of the citizen in a democracy; 4) the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democracy; 5) opportunities for citizen participation in civic life, politics and government.

UNESCO, in its «Civic Education For Media Professionals: A Training Manual» (Banda, [forthcoming]), appropriates this framework. For such a model of media education for citizenship in Africa, the UNESCO manual is structured around:

- Critical analysis of the correlation between media, democracy and development.

- Development of an emancipatory vision of journalism.

- Cultivation of an active citizenship.

- Entrenchment of a viable institutional infrastructure of democracy.

- Promotion of an informed adherence to human rights.

### 5.1. Media, Democracy and Development

The adoption of the Millennium Development Goals in 2000 has called for examining the role of the media in the achievement of the goals, including assessing the conditions under which media influence can be at its maximum. Although the role of the media in development has always been assumed, it is important to adduce evidence of the link between media performance and societal development (Norris, 2006). Adducing such evidence needs to be placed within a conceptual framework that links the attainment of development to the expansion of people's democratic entitlements, and the capabilities that these entitlements generate (Sen, 1999a). Such entitlements transcend income and include the totality of rights and opportunities that people face. Sen sees the expansion of freedom both as the primary end and primary means of development. He calls for social development –enhanced literacy, accessible and affordable health care, the empowerment of women, and the free flow of information– as necessary precursors of the kind of development most economists

are concerned about, namely: increase in gross national product, rise in personal incomes, industrialisation, and technological advance (Sen, 1999a).

This perspective of democracy and development as inseparable informs many projects implemented around media and development. It sees the media as an enabler and catalyst of the kind of civic participation and empowerment that promotes human development. Its reference to media is implied by Amatya Sen: «In that context, we have to look at the connection between political and civil rights, on the one hand, and the prevention of major economic disasters, on the other. Political and civil rights give people the opportunity to draw attention forcefully to general needs and to demand appropriate public action. The response of a government to the acute suffering of its people often depends on the pressure that is put on it. The exercise of political rights (such as voting, criticizing, protesting, and the like) can make a real difference to the political incentives that operate on a government» (1999b: 6).

The work of Norris (2006) on the statistical correlation between a free press and democratisation, good governance and human development, although its focus is fundamentally on liberal conceptions of media, democracy and development, must be noted as contributory to evidentiary arguments for linking media to the realisation of democracy and development.

## 5.2. Emancipatory Vision of Journalism

This analysis has already demonstrated how contemporary media education seems to be held captive to instrumentalist definitions of what constitutes journalism. It has also shown the need for a more critical-paradigmatic perspective of journalism, rooted in the geographies, histories, politics and economics of the African continent. Yet, at the same time, it has cautioned against unnecessary statist and other encroachments on the practice of journalism, by underscoring journalistic civic autonomy as opposed to professional «automation».

African media educators need to debunk received understandings of how media ought to be structured and operated. Such a postcolonial re-conceptualisation is certainly relevant to the role of African media in civic life. In general, then, African media educators need to ponder journalism in terms of its contributions to realising what Peter Dahlgren (2000) refers to as the «empirical dimensions» of civic culture. To paraphrase Dahlgren (2000: 321-322), the media could:

- Provide an inclusive, pluralistic public sphere for imparting relevant knowledge and competencies to citizens.

- Inculcate loyalty to democratic values and procedures and thus cultivate civic virtue (participation, solidarity, tolerance, courage, etc.).

- Personify the practices, routines, traditions associated with democratic citizenship.

- Foster the construction of the kinds of identities associated with democratic citizenship.

## 5.3. Active Citizenship

Citizenship in Africa must be historicised in order to allow for a contextual analysis of it. This entails understanding how citizenship has been used as a basis for regulating politics in Africa. The struggles for political liberation in Africa were largely because the colonised peoples laid claim to their «natural» citizenship of the colonised societies. Along with that claim was another claim –to demand political, economic, and socio-cultural rights as accruals of their citizenship. This implies the connection between legal-political citizenship and socio-economic citizenship. «Legal-political citizenship» refers to the legal conferment by the post-colonial state of the rights and freedoms associated with citizenship. «Socio-economic citizenship» refers to the fact that the post-colonial state was expected to create an enabling environment in which citizens could live up to their cultural identities and sustain that through engagement in meaningful economic activities.

It must be acknowledged, however, that most postcolonial states have largely continued the colonial practice of treating their populations as «subjects» whose participation in the body politic is no more than just voting at election time to legitimise the ruling elite's hold on political power (Mamdani, 1996). This should bring us to analyse the nature of democratic governance in such postcolonial states, and determine how the bounds of citizenship are expanded. Another argument has been advanced that so-called citizenship rights are enjoyed more by the ruling classes than by the general population (Mamdani, 1996), resulting in an elitist democracy. This observation generally leads to the critique of individual-centred types of democracy, such as may result in an environment of excessive liberalism. What type of democracy promotes genuine citizenship? The concept of citizenship thus becomes embroiled in debates about media policy and regulation. How can we use the concept of citizenship to craft the kinds of media policies and regulations that promote inclusive and participative citizenship?

## 5.4. Viable Institutional Infrastructure of Democracy

The media do not exist in a vacuum. Indeed, their civic influence cannot be isolated from other pillars of democracy, such as effectively representative parliaments, independent courts, critical civil society bodies, etc. For example, if the media are going to fight corruption, there is need for strong investigative agencies as well as robust courts. There is also need for strong civil society bodies that can sustain pressure on corrupt public officials and other entities. It is important, therefore, for media education for citizenship to include a component that highlights the media's interconnectedness with other social institutions in the body politic.

## 5.5. Adherence to Human Rights

Human rights are an integral component of any media education for citizenship. This is borne out by the fact that there are illustrations of situations in which media

not only failed in educating and reporting about human rights, but also were themselves among perpetrators of human rights violations. In 1994, some 500,000 to one million Tutsi were killed. Radio Television Mille (RTML) played an essential role in this genocide (Hamelink, 1998).

Essential to any debate on human rights and the media is the fact that the media are also often a victim of the violation of the basic human right to freedom of information (Hamelink, 1998). Such a perspective is in tune with the right to freedom of expression. This right is recognised as a basic human right in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the European Convention on Human Rights, the American Convention on Human Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Norris, 2006). As such, it lends itself to universal recognition and application.

## 6. Conclusion

The core argument of this analysis is that African media education needs to define a pedagogical agenda for citizenship. But that task lies in a postcolonial revisionism of Africa's inherited modes of thought and practice about media. The neo-colonial dependence of African media education is still evident in the liberal pedagogical emphasis on professional-journalistic automation. It is clear, however, that African populations have, in the aftermath of the «second liberation» in the 1990s (Diamond & Plattner, 1999), become politically and civically apathetic. As such, this analysis calls for an emancipatory journalism that is embedded in civil society, as illustrated by the Panos radio listening clubs to demonstrate the civic influence of the media in Malawi and Zambia. Although the evidence is anecdotal, it demonstrates the normative, political and visionary possibilities of media education.

To this end, this analysis proposes a model of media education for citizenship which places citizens at the centre of its ontological and epistemological preoccupation. The model foregrounds a critical-paradigmatic pedagogy that focuses on the following core competencies:

- Critically analysing the correlation between media, democracy and development.
- Developing an emancipatory vision of journalism.
- Cultivating an active citizenship.
- Entrenching a viable institutional infrastructure of democracy.
- Promoting an informed adherence to human rights.

At the epicentre of this model is the realisation that the structures and functions of the media are not fixed –they are implicated in the socio-political process. This model represents a postcolonial emancipation from the liberal philosophical strictures that seem to enslave African media education.

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# 6. Promoting Youth Civic Participation with Media Production: The Case of Youth Voice Editorial Board

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ABSTRACT

Public space, especially online, is now offered more than ever before. Still, the role of public media production in youth cultures has not been very much noticed in civic pedagogic settings. This analysis provides insights into the relations between youth, civic participation and media publicity in the context of youth work. It is based on a three years follow up study of the Youth Voice Editorial Board in Finland, among youngsters aged 13-17 years. The results of the study show that youth citizenship can be strengthened with media literacy education. This process consists of three elements related with each other: youth civic participation (including media productions), media publicity, and pedagogy understood as learning community. They foster feelings of societal influence among young people and are conducive to online participation as well as traditional civic engagement and can prove effective in increasing cross-generational dialogue.

KEY WORDS

Audiences, civic engagement, civic participation, media literacy education, media production, media publicity. public journalism, community media

## 1. Introduction

Public space to interact with each other and to make your viewpoints visible to everyone is now offered more than ever before —online. Community services as Youtube, MySpace and picture galleries along with Wikipedia and blogs involve users to public and social knowledge creation, mostly in commercial and international media environments. These kinds of online public media are in the interests of young people as they can interact and come up with their own media work. Youth researchers talk about «mediated youth cultures», where the uses of several media (like Internet, mobile phone, television) as well as the modes of expression (music, text and image added to their multimodalities), are integrated in the everyday lives of the young (Hodkinson & Deicke, 2007).

Still, the role of public media in youth cultures has not been taken seriously enough in fostering youth citizenship, in school and not in organisations offering free time activities to young people, i.e. in professional youth work. There seems to be a risk of generational divide as the youngsters are born into the age of digital media and the middle-aged and elder people just migrate into them. Especially, in educational settings, the main question should be: How to change young people's perception of the net, not just as a tool for fun but also a tool for civic activity? How to integrate online media to civic education, if educators are not familiar with mediated youth cultures?

The internet has emerged as an interesting arena for researchers to look for new ways of civic participation and social empowerment of young citizens (Bennet, 2008). However, there is a need for perspectives that go beyond the hype of empowering information and communication technologies. The older you are, the more likely to engage, the younger you are, the more likely not to engage in political matters, even on the net. Moreover, there are differences among the young: some youngsters do engage actively via the net, but for some the net is not an important media for political engagement at all (Dahlgren & Olsson, 2007; Livingstone, Couldry & Markham, 2007). Other young «activists», in order to generate cross-generational discussions, might select a variety of media, not only the net, for participation (Kotilainen & Rantala, 2009). Following this, it is important to ask: How could public media in general be integrated in fostering youth civic engagement and for promoting cross-generational discussions on civic matters? And how about the juxtaposition of political and cultural participation: is it useful when speaking about the young?

Looking closely at the Finnish case study about youth civic participation through public media production allows for a better understanding of the stakes and challenges presented above. Concerning media education, the focus is on bridging the generational gap between young people and adults and articulating youth civic agency between cultural and political activities. The more practical question explored here is: How to bring young people and youth experts to dialogue with media experts in the process?

Analyzing the roots of media literacy education in its articulation with civic agency implies to take into account the histories of national awakening, utilitarianism, and the rise of labour movements in Western societies since the late 18th century, in conjunction

with the rise of modern media. In Scandinavia, and in Finland specifically, the roots go deep to the long tradition in folk (people) education. Basic literacy had an important impact on workers' efficiency, but it also developed their faculties to know their rights and gave them an overall sense of empowerment in society. From this vantage point, the present time –global media culture– seems to be marking yet another era in the long story of folk education. The multiple new literacies such as media literacy refer to various competences, coping strategies, and survival skills needed in current times (Kotilainen & Suoranta, 2007; Freire, 1973).

The case, Youth Voice Editorial Board (http://nk.hel.fi/nuortenaanitoimitus), is implemented as voluntary free time activity in professional youth work administrated by the city of Helsinki, the capital of Finland. The case consists of a group of young people and their supervising youth workers producing news and other journalistic material, mostly for the mainstream media, as for the main national newspaper Helsingin Sanomat (www.hs.fi), the national television channels owned by the broadcasting company YLE (www.yle.fi) and the most popular online picture gallery among the Finnish youth, IRC-Gallery (http://irc-galleria.net). It is part of the private Sulake Corporation, the developer of the online game «Habbo Hotel» for teenagers; it has national communities in 32 countries, so far (www.sulake.com).

The participants of the Youth Voice Editorial Board are young people aged from 13 to 18 years. At daytime they are pupils in junior and senior high school and students receiving basic vocational education. After school –sometimes during the school days– they come to work on this voluntary project with their tutoring youth experts. Twenty to fourty youngsters have been regularly committed to the project and it has involved approximately 120 young people in a variety of ways during its second operational year, in 2007. These young people are not aiming at the professional level of media production, in the first place. Instead, the goal of this project –coming from adolescents themselves– is to change the contents of mainstream media, getting the adult journalists to pay attention to civic issues important to young people. Added to this, they want to make the young more visible on the media as experts of issues concerning their own generation and promote cross-generational public discussions with adults through their own media production.

## 2. Youth Civic Engagement and Media Education in Finland

In the Finnish context, the questions of civic engagement and political participation via media are especially interesting due to the view that, historically, the concept of «citizen» refers to a cultural actor rather than to a political actor. Civic agency has been actualised more in cultural spheres, such as youth associations, than in political ones, such as parties (Stenius, 2003.) Since the late 1990s, following policies of the Council of Europe, with programmes emanating from the divisions of Youth and Education, the Finnish authorities have been concerned for active citizenship. The division of Education has launched several European programmes, and the whole year 2005 was named the year of «citizenship education» in Europe. Moreover, the European Commission White Paper, «A New Impetus for European Youth» (2001)

has pushed forward youth policy in the Northern countries as Finland. In comparison to the other Nordic countries and to most of the European countries, teachers in Finland had not especially emphasised civic engagement, at least anything related to politics (Suutarinen, 2000). Over the past few years, the authorities in this country have supported several experiments, particularly online projects, with the aim of enhancing civic engagement among citizens.

Recent Finnish national governments have even taken media education into the public agenda in the cross-sectorial programmes. Such programmes have enhanced learning materials and training campaigns for educators. The Citizen Participation Policy Programme (2003-07) called for civic education reform in which media education was emphasised as a means to foster active citizenship and information society skills, including media literacy (OM 5: 2005). Additionally, the national Youth Law (Nuorisolaki 2006) aims at enhancing «youth active citizenship and social empowerment of young people»; it lays the stress on ensuring that the voices of young people are heard on issues concerning them.

As a result, administrators in national and local youth policies and youth experts in associations have found technological possibilities for youth empowerment and civic engagement with the internet. Technological development has pushed forward the state policy that has provided resources and tools and allocated public channels that didn't exist before, like youth initiative channels online for local civic participation. Additionally, different modes of professional youth assistance in commercial online communities like picture galleries have developed mainly with the support of the state. For example, adult supervisors go to the Finnish version of «Habbo Hotel» to meet the young instead of waiting for the young to come to contact them physically. It is like clearinghouse work for assistance online in several sectors of the lives of young people. Consultation online happens in the form of the professional figure of the youth expert created by the game.

Other national versions of this commercial game, for example, for teenagers in Spain (www.habbo.es) do not necessarily include this kind of youth assistance. It depends on the national youth policy, if youth consultation online and collaboration with commercial media is considered worthwhile. In Finland, different modes of online consultation and youth assistance in game environments, picture galleries, etc., have recently been included to the training programmes of professional youth experts in the universities of applied sciences.

In the case project Youth Voice Editorial Board, media are not only a tool for professional youth experts to meet and discuss with young people. Additionally, the project focuses on changing the contents of mainstream media by introducing the youth perspective on the news. For their own media production, the participating young people need adults' tutoring, at least for generating media content. In Finland, in out-of-school contexts like professional youth work in communes, media literacy education has been implemented mainly in media workshops to produce youth media all over the country for several years already. This kind of activity belongs mainly to its own brand, «cultural youth work», which emphasises artistic expression, i.e.

creating your own music, arts, etc. The case study takes a new tack from that cultural tradition, toward an increase in political work and civic agency.

Youth Voice Editorial Board is implemented in the services of Civil Society Support in the Helsinki Youth Department, though it remains in cooperation with Youth Media Centre in cultural youth work. It means that both strands, the cultural and the civic, are working together and not in opposition or in ignorance of each other. From the viewpoint of media literacy, it has been interesting to study how the professionals in these two different sections –the youth experts of civic engagement and the youth experts of cultural media production– collaborate with each other. This was the major focus of the project that yielded the most interesting results.

In Finland, media literacy education, for example in media workshops, is not a very common activity in youth work in communes, but its presence has slowly increased –partly because of the technological developments of youth consultation online. This appearance seems to be like the one in schools with the developments of e-learning and teaching with ICTs in comparison to media literacy education, i.e. «teaching about and through the media» aiming to develop critical and creative skills of media literacy. Today these two trends, the technological trend (media as a tool for different educational purposes) and the sociocultural trend (media culture as an educational content), are actively searching for cooperation and integrative practices show up continually (Buckingham, 2003).

Lately, the public discussions and claims for media literacy education have increased –partly because of recent national tragedies, like school massacres in the villages of Jokela (November, 2007) and Kauhajoki (September, 2008). In both cases, the killers were heavy internet users and game-players, as well. Discussions about these cases on public media have focused on Internet safety issues and overall problems in youth well-being (Kotilainen, 2008b). Concerning the latter case, for example, the questions of gun control law and the consequences of recent cultural changes in Western societies (especially in Finland) have been in the news headlines. As a result, Internet has been increasingly discussed as an integrated part of the (youth's) world – a part where evil can occur just as anywhere else.

Beyond those two recent tragedies, however, the claims for media literacy education in Finland grow up mostly from a broad scale of viewpoints, that all share the project of national well-being in a globalized media world. The driving force is the two-pronged vision of media literacy as a basic civic skill and as a basic human right for all children and young people. This vision aims both at providing safety for the child and giving the child a voice (Kupiainen, Sintonen & Suoranta, 2008). These viewpoints have support in the UN Convention for the Rights of the Child, valid for children and young people up to 18 years old, and in the UN Millennium Development Goals, based on the 2000 UN Millennium Declaration.

For example, article 13 in the UN Convention for the Rights of the Child says:

> 1) The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally,

in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice.

2) The exercise of this right may be subject to certain restrictions, but these shall only be such as provided by law and the necessary.

a) For respect of the rights or reputations of others.

b) For the protection of national security or of public order, or public health or morals.

In Finland, the enthusiasts of media literacy education come from several sectors: school, youth work organisations, libraries, cultural organisations such as media and film centres and administrators from local to national governance. The first Finnish media educational organisation, Film and Television Education Centre (now Media Centre Metka), was established in 1958. The researchers and other experts of media education established a national association in 2005 for generating cooperation among experts coming from different fields and pushing forward media literacy in Finnish society. The Finnish Society on Media Education has grown rapidly. For example, it is developing online services for national actors of media education with the funding of the ministry of education (see www.mediaeducation.fi).

Promotion of media literacy has been included in the national government policy for 2007-11, and appears in several strategic documents concerning children and young people. In these policy programmes, the rationale rests mainly on visions of «the safe media environment», but also of «supporting cross-sectorial activities in the field of media education». Additionally, media literacy has been included to the missions of several ministries, like the ministries of education, law and justice, and transports and communications. Media literacy as cross-curricular theme is included to curricula from pre-primary education to high school. Vocational education curricula are currently being reviewed (Ministry of Education, 2008).

According to a national survey conducted by the ministry of law and justice (OM 5/2005), the main problems in media literacy education are the continuing project-orientation and lack of stable funding: when projects end, the follow-up may fail. Additionally, the training of teachers is still poor. Research on the area has been advanced mainly by active individuals in different fields of science, mostly in the fields of media studies and education science (Kupiainen, Sintonen & Suoranta 2008). Lately, thinking about the development of media educational practices, media pedagogy has been developing faster in other society sectors than in cumbersome structures of the formal school system.

## 3. Media Participation in Youth Voice Editorial Board

In this study, media are embedded within the social relationships and possibilities to participate in societies and local communities, i.e. civic cultures (Dahlgren 2006). Empirically, the case study proceeds from the perception that the young are active, participatory audiences sharing and exchanging information, ideas, and experiencing media as consumers and agents (McQuail, 2000, 120; Ridell, 2006). Audience activity, however, is not one single mode of participation. A Finnish media researcher Seija Ridell (2006), for example, suggests a variety of possible actor positions for audiences,

such as object of media, user satisfying own needs, experiencer looking for high feelings, and more public positions as interpreter, negotiator, visible expresser and creative actor.

Following Ridell's (2006) classification, media participation can be defined as active, as the individual's internal interaction with media, for example creating one's own opinion while watching television reality programming and / or using the offered ways of communicating with the programme, such as voting. Public media participation includes more public positions, as mentioned above. In all these positions, young people can act in media «publicity», for example discuss online or create contents themselves (Kotilainen, 2008a). This public media participation is akin to what philosopher Hannah Arendt (1958) calls «vita active». Arendt has conceptualised «vita active», the human life which has been owed to public and political issues, referring also to the micro spheres of life. She writes that being a human is always framed with being in relations with others and communality. Therefore, the young are also actors who can make new openings and public actions.

Power in media culture is linked to the publicities that can be managed through media, for example in online communities. For Arendt (1958; Habermas, 1989), publicity is pluralistic, which means that people can be visible all at the same time in full difference. Following this view, marginalised groups, such as young people, should have a share of the public space to have their say. Regarding societal themes, however, young people have seldom been interviewed in mainstream news. They are more often presented as victims, criminals or top experts, for example as the winners of different competitions (Raundalen & Steen, 2002; Unga I media, 2002). The multiple roles of the young as public agents seem to be visible only in the lockers of youth publicity, for example in youth magazines and youth online communities. For the young, it is challenging to reach out into cross-generational publicity, for example initiating discussions on political matters. For them, having the feeling of influencing, i.e. to be heard by adults, is important in generating interest in civic participation (Kotilainen & Rantala. 2008).

How are the young developing their civic identities in contemporary societies? Peter Dahlgren (2006, 273) states that civic competence cannot derive exclusively from political society, but it emerges from the overall development of the individual. Thus, «non-political contexts of civil society can have a bearing on how people engage and manage in political contexts». This questions how individuals self-create themselves into citizens, and additionally, how their skills to talk and express themselves through media then come on the research agenda. Dahlgren (2000; 2004; 2005; 2006) discusses the concept of «civic culture» as a way to approach citizenship in mediated societies. Instead of emphasising formal political terms of citizenship, this perspective underscores the meanings, practices, and identities of civic agents in their communication acts.

Four types of civic identities of young people in relation to media can be highlighted from previous research: seekers, communalists, communicators and activists (Kotilainen & Rantala, 2009; Livingstone, Bober & Helsper, 2004). The seekers are

the young people who are still looking for civic issues to engage in and communities to connect to. These young people could also be considered as potential civic agents in their own terms when the matters, communities and spaces are discovered. The communalists refer to more traditional citizens, who often think that they have possibilities of having their say in their own life sphere, but they do not consider it important to act more publicly. They tend to act in peer and hobby communities. The communicators are the young who are connected via media to multiple communities, but often do not see this interaction in political terms. Finally, activists are the young who have general interest issues they want to make public and they find public spaces to communicate.

In most cases, young people seem to be interested and willing to interact via media, especially on local issues that are important to them (Loader, 2007). Additionally, activist orientation to the structures of media can occur among youngsters less than 18 years old. For example, after the Jokela school massacre in 2007, the young living in the village insisted that media professionals needed to reflect on their own principles of good communication in news flows about crisis. The youth were upset about the methods journalists used to secure interviews with or take photos of residents, victims and their relatives –showing their private, personal grief in public. They published their claims in an announcement in the main Finnish media outlets, two weeks after the shooting (Kotilainen, 2008b). Some results were seen less than a year after in news flows about the Kauhajoki school massacre: soon after the crisis, the interviewed were mainly adults and experts; the grief of the young was not shown as openly as earlier.

It appears that the young have increased their interest for participation on media, more broadly than online. For example, the starting point of the Youth Voice Editorial Board in 2005 was a youth initiative in the events of the Voice of Youth Campaign, for changing the limited popular image of the young, which they think has been created by the mainstream media. Additionally, the young wanted to create discussion with adults on civic matters related to young people.

Youth Voice Editorial Board can be seen as a critical, even radical pedagogic project that emphasises the sense of civic agencies and collective actions in the public sphere. The aim of the project, i.e. that of ensuring that the voices of young people be heard via media, addresses the questions of communication for social change with a spirit of empowerment 'à la Freire' (Gumucio-Dagron & Tufte, 2006; Freire, 1973; 2001; Kotilainen & Suoranta, 2007). But what are the kinds of pedagogical practices actualised in the project? How is media publicity linked to pedagogical practices? What challenges are arising?

### 3.1. A Piece of Participatory Action Research

The study of the Youth Voice Editorial Board was carried out as a piece of participatory action research (Reason & Bradbury, 2006), in which questionnaires were issued to young people of 13 to 18 years and document analysis, participant

observation and several rounds of interviews among the young and youth workers took place. The number of young people involved in this study has been approximately thirty, and regular consultations took place with three youth workers, one of them being the expert responsible for media production of this project. The analysis focuses mostly on material gathered among youth workers, i.e. interviews, project memos, memos of researcher's consultations and the online communications between the producer and the young people, in 2006-08 (emails and information on the project's shared a wiki-platform).

The approach of participatory action research within cultural studies framework was chosen, because the case study and the general research project included the same aims of increasing youth civic engagement via public media production. Additionally, the researcher's active consultative involvement was needed at the beginning of the process, for example in tutoring the young budding journalists. For three years, it also implied attending the professional discussions with youth workers in their own meetings. So, the researcher was involved in the young people's work and the work of their supervisors in media cultural empowerment, together with all the participants. The knowledge creation in this project has been collaborative, too, especially in meetings with youth workers. The processes conceptualized by the researcher have been shared with young people, who have challenged them in critical discussions, thus resulting in the co-construction of the observation and participation practices (Kassam, 1980; Reason & Bradbury, 2006).

From the beginning of its implementation, the Youth Voice Editorial Board has linked mainstream media publicity with editorial and media pedagogical practices to youth work. This is the most innovative dimension of the project, as usually, media work in general in Finnish youth work concentrates on youth media publicity (Hat Factory Youth Media Centre (www.hattu.net), if any publicity is integrated to practices at all.

In order to implement the young people's initiative for youth media production into mainstream publicity, youth workers on the Youth Voice Editorial Board established, together with an active group of young people, a planning group that worked to make it possible to run a youth editorial board. From the beginning of this project, three persons have been involved in the services of Civil Society Support in the Helsinki Youth Department: one experienced youth worker (female) as a leading person, one youth worker (female) and one media producer (male), who was hired for this particular project. He had just passed his degree in audiovisual media studies in one of the Universities of Applied Sciences in Finland. The Youth Voice Editorial Board was his main project. Additionally, in 2007, one newspaper journalist (female) was hired for this project. The interviews, production observation and consultative meetings have been carried out mainly with the leading experienced youth worker and the media producer.

### 4. Young People and Youth Experts Learning Together

Youth Voice Editorial Board can be classified as a media pedagogic project that integrates public journalism with youth work. Public journalism is a movement that emphasises citizens' interaction with media: journalists evoke public discussions about the topics raised by people. As in public journalism, these young people, for example, as readers of the newspaper «Helsingin Sanomat», are acting reporters, and professional journalists work as providers and guardians of access to publicity (Rosen, 1999; Martikainen, 2004). Additionally, Youth Voice Editorial Board can be compared to community media and the research undertaken on them since at least the 1970s in different parts of world. These small-scale media developments are concerned to identify transformations in media whereby people could become producers of media messages and a sense of community among people might develop (Gumucio-Dagron & Tufte, 2006).

Youth Voice Editorial Board is implemented as a press agency, a circulator of news to different media, produced by the young. The project has produced discussion programmes for national television and articles for national newspaper, on issues like young people's mental health and depression and the minor teaching of civics in the Finnish education system. Additionally, the project has produced an election machine for the IRC-Gallery before national elections, where young users can test their political opinions online with the candidates. So, all the youth productions concerning societal issues have reached mainstream publicity. Additionally, articles and programmes are published also on the youth media website Free Your Mind (www.yle.fi/free).

Youth experts have created the structures for the youth media production and they organise weekly meetings and workshops for young people involved in the project. From the beginning, the young have elected democratically a special YVEB Board with four chairmen, selected twice a year. This youth board makes decisions about the direction of the project, like choosing the professional staff invited to participate in the project. Additionally, members of the board negotiate about the space and forms of youth media production with the representatives of mainstream media. Youth workers organise these cross-generational, official negotiations, prepare young people to discuss and present their ideas; also, afterwards, they reflect about the effects with them, analyzing their feelings and ways to proceed forward.

In practice, Youth Voice Editorial Board has been organised in different editorial working groups. Young people involved can choose the group in which they prefer to participate: a) television group including shooting and set decoration, b) newspaper editing group or c) IRC-Gallery group including planning and implementing of the societal Gallup polls online.

The media production of an actual issue starts by presenting and generating ideas all together, for example in weekly meetings. After an idea has been approved by media professionals, youngsters concentrate on doing the manuscript and information retrieval before the production takes place. «For me, it has been productive to develop new kinds of media pedagogic practices together with colleagues eager to learn together, and all the pragmatic discussions! Only, we have always too little

time… Additionally, it has been rewarding to see, how within two years in this Youth Department, youth workers' attitudes towards media have changed from the necessary evil to a resource and an interesting activity environment» (media producer, email interview, 2008-01-14).

Media producer, journalist and youth workers together have developed several media-pedagogic practices to educate the young for public journalism and for audio-visual media production. For example, the meetings of the newspaper editing group start with «the observation of the week» for stimulating ideas of news. All of the participants have to tell about at least one observation from their life, connected to a social phenomenon like «recycle bins are always full». Another example is «three-question's interview», which is a peer practice of the interview technique. One can pose only three questions about an issue: the first question is of current interest, the second question can deepen the issue and the third question is future oriented or personal. A successful method among the young became the practice of «the unknown expert»: they pick up strangers from the street and interview them as experts on some issue (Martikainen, 2004).

The main challenges mentioned by the interviewed youth workers are linked to a new project that requires new modes of cooperation in the youth department and with media. They had to earn the trust of the administrators in the department and the leaders in media companies. Most adults find the nature of this kind of youth public journalism strange in the first place, because they tend to think that for all young people, the internet is the only agreeable forum for participation. Additionally, in the youth department, it has been challenging to organise the cooperation between the more culture oriented Youth Media Hat Factory as a production environment and the Services of Civil Society Support that is the home of the social content production.

The Media producer talks about a certain participation ideology that makes this project different from other youth media projects: «The participation ideology is so visible in our project. It includes a background philosophy of the young as central actors. Young people are making decisions, planning and doing themselves, and for that we have the structures like collaborative meetings and youth spokesmen system. Additionally, our starting point is that everybody can participate and influence everything, and just trying to have your say is valuable» (media producer, email interview 2008-01-28).

The Youth worker makes the differentiation with other youth work context. She thinks that Youth Voice Editorial Board is located at a different level, as it doesn't focus on using media like other projects but concentrates on media contents and aims at changing media: «Good youth workers handle their own district, including perhaps some stories about youth events to local newspaper or radio. We are discussing media contents, so we are one stage forward from basic youth work. We argue that the content in mainstream media should reflect more the point of view of young people. For example, in discussions with YLE (The Finnish Broadcasting Company), our youngsters argued for more young people in the professional program production» (youth worker, interview 2006-03-21).

The professional youth workers and the media producer have learned together with the young participants while developing media pedagogic practices and media productions. They have developed new practices, modes of cooperation with media companies and inside the Youth Department. How about the perspective of the young participants? For example, this is how a 17-year old girl, who has been involved in the project for three years, describes her relationship to it: «I have worked as negotiator in cooperative meetings, member, hostess in the discussions on television, discussant, camera shooter, script, editor and as journalist collecting background material. I've been allowed to do and learn everything I want. I've been allowed to succeed and fail freely... I have learnt how to make compromises, how to lead, to cooperate with others, to be patient, to cope with stress... media critics, braveness to express myself via media and creativity» (Kotilainen & Rantala, 2008).

For a boy, 18, the main motive of participation was the political content. After two years of participation, he names the project his «way of life»: «It has revolutionised my social networks with valuable contacts and (hopefully) lifelong friendships. The concrete media production opened my eyes to the broad problems of our everyday life… the growing understanding of doing media and societal discussions with other youngsters have taught me tolerance for different ways of thinking and general principles for acting in a group» (Kotilainen & Rantala, 2008).

Youth Voice Editorial Board has created media education practices related to civic engagement and media publicity in several ways. The analysis of data from the different actors, including young participants, makes some dimensions of the process visible (see Table 1).

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**CIVIC / POLITICAL PARTICIPATION:**

- Real experiences about influencing.

- New ways to participate in civic affairs.

- Formal participatory processes of civic engagement (for example, meeting techniques and argumentation).

**MEDIA PUBLICITY:**

- Media publicity for content production, offered by several media.

- Cross-generational audiences.

**PEDAGOGY:**

- Learning by doing.

- Interaction with peers and adults like youth workers, media professionals and administrators.

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Table 1. Dimensions of Civic Media Education (Kotilainen & Rantala, 2008).

In the case of the Youth Voice Editorial Board, media publicity has not only been a channel for civic engagement, but an environment to engage with alternative ways in cross-generational publicity as well. For example, the youth made news have been

published among the news made by professional journalists in the newspaper Helsingin Sanomat. Moreover, youth made television programmes have been shown on prime time television in YLE (The Finnish Broadcasting Company). Additionally, the project has produced alternative content on social issues on the online youth picture gallery, reaching youth publicity. So, Youth Voice Editorial Board can be considered as a youth news agency / press agency producing public journalism for several media.

Youth Voice Editorial Board has produced mainly real life face-to-face meetings, interaction with peers and collaborative media production. In this project, pedagogic practices have included interaction with media professionals and administrators as well, for example negotiations, presentations and preparations for funding applications with youth workers. Besides learning media production, the youngsters have learnt the communication processes of more traditional civic engagement as well, for example meeting techniques and argumentation (Kotilainen, 2005).

## 5. Generating the Experiences of Influence in a Society

So what then is important in promoting youth civic participation? The most important aim seems to be trying to offer feelings of societal influence to young people, for the construction of youth civic identities in contemporary societies circled with internet and other media (Kotilainen & Rantala, 2009; Dahlgren 2005; 2006). Here the experiences and feelings of influence have been initiated via media production about issues important to the young actors. Media production has been included in the processes of youth work, i.e. professional youth assistance and consultation.

The results of this study suggest that one important element is media publicity that allows mainstream audiences to hear the voices of young people. More work should be done to develop cross-generational interaction, i.e. adults being audiences for youth media productions and youth voices being heard by adults. Researcher Peter Levine (2008) suggests «strategies for building audiences»: it seems that this is one of the main tasks in planning civic media education today. Implementing youth media for the young audiences is important, but for all young people it is not enough: they need cross-generational audiences for generating discussions and getting their voice out in the public sphere. All media forms and mixed media –youth publicity and cross-generational publicity– can be used, including blogs and communities online.

As for pedagogic practices, the research showed the importance of creating communities of learners, including interaction and reflection possibilities with peers and youth worker, i.e. adult as co-learner and supervisor. Additionally, the civic themes should arise from young people, not from adults' ideas. While enhancing civic engagement, participatory actions integrated to media production should be supported, i.e. getting real experiences of «having a say».

This kind of media education, through youth public journalism, cross-generational discussion and media work can foster civic identities and engage young people to participate in the local civic culture. The results show that the Youth Editorial Board has offered media publicity for youngsters' views on societal themes not only locally

but also nationally, in mainstream media. In this sense, this civic media education has developed civic culture and interactive, alternative publicity for the young. Local educators, i.e. youth workers, have had a significant, not necessarily easy, role. They were not prepared to run this kind of media project, but they were ready to learn. After the process, it seems that youth experts also need media education, i.e. they should be educated as instructors for youth media production and doing collaboration with professionals of media. Moreover, media education for educators as teachers and youth experts should extend professionals of media, too. This would make collaboration with schools and youth organisations easier in projects of youth media production. Moreover, professionals in media organisations could develop such projects themselves.

The results support earlier findings about the challenges in media education in school but offer an extension in an informal, out of school context (Buckingham, 2003; Kotilainen & Suoranta, 2007). Inadequate media competences of youth workers are one the main challenges: they need, for example, to know more about how media organisations and media publicity work. Additionally, the collaboration on several levels, with media professionals, administrators and other sections of youth work, has proved challenging for the youth experts.

One challenge in laying the stress on media production is the reflection on the process. For example, David Buckingham (2003) argues that youth experts are willing to make media with young people, but they tend to ignore reflection, i.e. discussing about aspects like media ethics. So, how can we know what young people really learn about media publicity, for example ethics on publishing one's own material or the rights of interviewed person? Youth Voice Editorial Board has faced questions like this in the processes of production, and reflection has taken place in regular project meetings. But it is a big question: How to create youth awareness about ethical issues in general? Young people don't naturally know about human rights and therefore the interest in them has to be brought from outside, or elicited in a participative way as it has been in this project. At least, these are important points for future research.

Considering young people, the needed civic media literacy skills that stand out in this research are for example, the capabilities to express one's opinions through multimodal, cultural modes of media, to feel tolerance for different cultures of expression and to understand the ways of doing media. While watching young people in process, i.e. producing media in the project, it was difficult to separate cultural activities from civic ones. Media production itself acquires cultural competencies described above, even if the content is societal. Especially concerning the young, possibilities to integrate cultural (f. ex. modes of expression) and civic (f. ex. content/issues) activities through media production should be generated in school and out-of-school activities like youth consultation.

Finally, considering youth policy and educational planning around the globe, the question arises of the political will to proceed forward with media education : if media literacy is understood as civic skills and part of responsible citizenship, shouldn't media education have a more robust place in national and international political strategies following the principles of UN Convention for the Rights of the Child?

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