

Digital and school journalism approaches at school

Enfoques sobre uso del digital e del y periodismo en la escuela

Usos do digital e do jornalismo escolar nas escolas

Maria José Brites

Associate professor

(Lusófona University, Centre for Research in Applied Communication, Culture, and New Technologies - CICANT)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9840-9554>

Portugal

- Guest paper -

Reception date: 11 May 2019

Published: 1 July 2020

To cite this article: Brites, M. J. (2020). Digital and school journalism approaches at school, *Icono 14*, 18 (2), 35-57. doi: 10.7195/ri14.v18i2.1579

Abstract

This article aims to reflect on school contexts of the use of digital tools and also on the possibility of going beyond technology itself and thinking about spaces of critical thinking, inspired by a process that is usually associated with journalism and its democratic tradition. These reflections result from the use of semi-open questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with teachers (compulsory education in Portugal) as part of a project on Audiences, News and Literacy - ANLite (2014–2018). Research questions imply identifying ways digital tools are perceived in schools and how journalism serves as an inspiration for democratic school environments. The results point to challenges related to teachers' fears about digital, but also to structural problems regarding access conditions to digital and equipment that allow quality access. The excess of tasks, including administrative, limits possibilities of collaboration between teachers and with young people. These latter challenges also constitute a possible increase in journalistic-inspired tasks that facilitate democratic processes in schools.

Key Words: *Use of digital at school; School journalism; Professors and technology; Digital collaboration; Critical thinking; Digital tools*

Resumen

Este artículo tiene como objetivo reflexionar sobre el uso de herramientas digitales en los contextos escolares de y también sobre la posibilidad de ir más allá de la tecnología misma y pensar en espacios de pensamiento crítico, inspirados en un proceso que generalmente se asocia con el periodismo y su tradición democrática. Estas reflexiones se hacen a partir del uso de encuestas semiabiertas y entrevistas semiestructuradas con profesores de educación obligatoria en Portugal, como parte de un proyecto sobre Audiencias, Noticias y Alfabetización - ANLite (2014-2018). Las preguntas de investigación implican la identificación de formas en que las herramientas digitales se perciben en las escuelas y cómo el periodismo sirve de inspiración para los entornos escolares democráticos. Los resultados apuntan a desafíos relacionados con los temores de los profesores sobre lo digital, pero también a los problemas estructurales relativos a las condiciones de acceso a lo digital y a los equipos que permiten el acceso de calidad. El exceso de tareas, incluidas las admi-

nistrativas, limita las posibilidades de colaboración entre profesores y con los jóvenes. Estos últimos desafíos también constituyen un posible aumento de las tareas inspiradas en la periodista que facilitan los procesos democráticos en las escuelas.

Palabras clave: *Uso de lo digital en la escuela; Periodismo escolar; Profesores y tecnología; Colaboración digital; Pensamiento crítico; Herramientas digitales*

Resumo

Este artigo pretende refletir sobre contextos escolares de utilização de ferramentas digitais e também sobre a possibilidade de ir além da tecnologia em si mesma e pensar espaços de pensamento crítico, inspirado por processo que habitualmente são associados ao jornalismo e à sua tradição democrática. Estas reflexões são feitas a partir da utilização de inquéritos semiabertos e entrevistas semiestruturadas a professores (ensino obrigatório em Portugal), no âmbito de um projeto sobre Audiências, Notícias e Literacias – ANLite (2014-2018). As perguntas de pesquisa implicam a identificação de formas como as ferramentas digitais são percebidas nas escolas e sobre como o jornalismo pode ou não servir de inspiração a ambientes escolares democráticos. Os resultados apontam para desafios relacionados com os receios que os professores têm relativamente ao digital, mas também para problemas estruturais relativamente às condições de acesso ao digital e aos equipamentos que permitem um acesso de qualidade. O excesso de tarefas, inclusive administrativas, limita possibilidades de colaboração entre professores e com jovens. Estes últimos desafios também se constituem como limitadores um possível aumento de tarefas de inspiração jornalística e facilitadoras de processos democráticos nas escolas.

Palavras chave: *Uso do digital na escola; Jornalismo escolar; Professores e tecnologia; Colaboração digital; Pensamento crítico; Ferramentas digitais*

Literature review

This article argues for the importance of fostering digital knowledge at school, encouraging critical thinking, and promoting projects inspired by journalistic practices. This pandemic situation of COVID-19 has shown clearly that the use of digital environments without a critical context might cause trouble. It is a lesson to

learn. Looking into the present and the past is fundamental to better understand the future, as stressed by Hobbs (2016). The author points out the impact of being a lifelong learner, especially on the field of media literacy, as it is an unfinished project.

The news indicate that we are in changing times, and saying this is not a new idea. The novelty is in considering how news and inherent social contexts are still relevant for improving connective journalism (Clark & Marchi, 2017) and in considering how young people can become more influential members of their communities. They can be inspired by journalism, producing stories and delivering them through online platforms (Brites, Santos, Jorge, & Catalão, 2017; Clark & Marchi, 2017). As the authors point out, it is relevant to consider “mutual listening and shared obligation that brings publics into being” (Clark & Marchi, 2017, p. 164). It can only be done by ensuring conditions to the critical use of online tools and also to guarantee that critical thinking is a leading active need in the educational system. When we consider young people, the technology that they are using “requires users to engage critically with the information they’re seeing” (boyd, 2014, p. 180). The author also points to a central problem: “When we assume that youth will just absorb all things digital through exposure, we absolve ourselves of our responsibility to help teenagers to develop the necessary skills” (boyd, 2014, pp. 180-181). The same arguments also implicate the need to address current challenges, as to be careful with algorithms that are not neutral (boyd, 2014). And when it is simply considered, access to the Internet can show different possibilities of critical understanding and participation, and the types of access are correlated with socioeconomic status (boyd, 2014).

The current unstable environment of disinformation requires necessary actions and actors, and journalism is among these very relevant sectors that must have an active role regarding media literacy, taking action to improve their practices and relationship with audiences toward a better informational environment (Brites & Pinto, 2017). Audiences have been disconnected from journalism for a long time, but media literacy can be a point of contact between journalists and audiences, promoting critical thinking. According to Mihailidis (2012), news literacy, under the umbrella of media literacy, supports the advancement of new, practical ways to

address the possibilities and pitfalls created by the blurring lines between journalism, citizenship and technology. Ultimately, news literacy aims to provide citizens with the ability to exercise their right to free expression.

When school systems do not provide full access to freedom and creativity, there is a price to pay. Research shows that these practices are often left out of the curriculum (Eleá & Mikos, 2017). Young people can combine creativity and skills to search and produce information in school and community contexts where they can learn by doing (Brites et al., 2017). Since the school contexts are of essential and primordial influence into children and young people's lives and their relation to critical thinking and the digital realms, what happens in schools in these regards is essential as a step for the future of students.

Media literacy is a crucial element to developing critical citizenship, and both are fundamental rights (Frau-Meigs, 2017; García-Ruiz, Matos, & Borges, 2016; Pereira, Pinto, Madureira, Pombo, & Guedes, 2014; UNESCO, 1982; Vários, 2011).

As we live in a deeply mediatised society (Couldry & Hepp, 2017), formal educational structures must lead these significant societal changes. Considering the Portuguese context, 20 years after the creation of the School Libraries Network (RBE) – a fundamental institution in the promotion of media and digital practices at school – and after the publication of several documents, such as the Media Education Referential (Pereira et al., 2014), it is essential that formal education follows current and significant societal changes.

The concept of media education and its connection to digital literacy has undergone thought evolution over the years and become increasingly dynamic. It has gone from settings that are more consistent with accessing, using, analysing, and communicating in various ways, to other sceneries that include specificities in themselves. Moreover, it is essential to focus on reflection and the ability to doubt critically, to improve participatory capacities, and foster the intrinsic connection to citizenship, as well as the relationships with digital media, among other aspects.

Teachers are often overwhelmed with various activities in schools; therefore, they do not always have time for new tasks. Scheibe (2009) provided some suggestions to take into account when thinking about activities in schools. Such as to know the contents and approaches that are already part of the curricular disciplines, to adapt existing plans or events, to encourage students to read and discuss information in different media formats and to know the themes, areas and priority contexts in school.

Teachers need to acquire more positive images of their abilities, as they often consider themselves incapable of handling the digital tasks in comparing to much younger pupils (Brites, Amaral, & Catarino, 2018). It is challenging to ignore generational differences and cleavages, which may not be as significant when the negative self-representations of teachers end up being visible.

A key aspect, which relates to generational differences and knowledge as well as issues of changing educational paradigms, is the fact that educational strategies of teachers sometimes need a complex and collaborative exchange of knowledge between students and teachers (Fernández-Cruz & Fernández-Díaz, 2016).

This discussion is not of small importance since media education has reverted to a social competence-based and involves us in the use of media in everyday life (Pfaff-Rüdiger & Riesmeyer, 2016).

Methodology

This article relies on the analysis of part of a large action research project on Audiences, News and Literacies – ANLite – that was developed between 2014 and 2018, mostly in Greater Porto (the second urban area of Portugal), except for two interviews that were conducted with teachers and schools near Porto but outside the Greater area. In this specific article, we rely on the 20 final semi-open questionnaires (2017–2018) that were distributed after a certified training course for teachers (up to the 12th grade) on issues of media and news literacy and also on a set of 14 semi-structured interviews (2016–2017) with teachers who had had any degree of connection to media- and journalism-inspired projects at their schools. In both sets of collected data, it was essential to consider the context of non-for-

mal learning in the context of school, which is usually associated with formal contexts. All of the participants (of both the questionnaires and the interviews) worked in public schools in low-income, middle-class, and middle-upper-class areas.

We consider the previous challenges identified in the literature review, concerning the complex framework of the 3rd decade of the new millennium, with models, disinformation and contemplation of free and critical environments needed at school and in the context of an asymmetric digital process. These are the research questions: (1) How are digital tools perceived at school?, and (2) How are journalistic tools considered at school?

Looking into the data

Teachers face the challenges of how to deal with technology under proper circumstances and do so in a relevant form, given the need to use it critically, the problem of disinformation with technology, and the need for critical thinking by teachers and students. It leads us back to those two questions mentioned earlier.

1. New digital tools

The question of how digital tools are perceived at school was a fundamental subject of questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, which had specific moments to think and present tools for the use of the media in school. These tools were mainly linked to digital contexts. Although the training focused more on technologies and the use of information and journalism in school, we worked with teachers to consider media as an ecological system and on how to take advantage of the specific opportunities of traditional and new media (Jenkins, 2006). This unique convergence spaces imply new challenges and, at the same time, multiple possibilities, with fewer borders between media and communication possibilities (Romero & Gómez, 2012). "The converge of multiple screens with diverse, simultaneous and instant contents of every order, available over the network, validate it as an essential need" (Romero & Gómez, 2012, p. 19).

MONOGRÁFICO

Some of the trainees shared experiences they had already carried out before and also in the context of training, using digital means but also complementary resources. It was the example of a school library teacher in a middle-class secondary school; they used to read print books, have a wall journal, and also have a digital school newspaper.

The final questionnaires clearly outlined that the teachers were surprised and enthusiastic about proposals for digital work and found them more desirable because they found it as a novelty for the future. It happened even though in some cases, these possibilities are seen as a challenging option for teachers to understand and use in their day-to-day work. This is why it is relevant to invest in training and to continue training teachers in the field of media education (Brites et al., 2018; Fernández-Cruz & Fernández-Díaz, 2016; Pérez-Tornero & Tayie, 2012; Pinto & Pereira, 2018; V. Tomé, 2016). Besides, one's media education is a strong pillar of articulation to citizenship and democracy (Aguaded, Sandoval-Romero, & Rodríguez-Rosell, 2016). Teacher's being trained on media education, digital citizenship, and the news is scarce in Portugal, and this edition (the first of three) clearly showed that teachers are willing to be challenged despite all the contingencies, as we will see.

"I will use several tools available on the Internet on sites that I got to know during training. I will use the news more often in the preparation of my classes. I will encourage students to investigate and report more rigorously based on journalistic ethics." (R 7, Final Questionnaire/FQ)

"I made contact with digital tools I did not know and was able to discuss with colleagues the topics addressed." (R 5, FQ)

Among both samples, we could also find examples of teachers that work in schools and have reduced access to technologies (for instance, computers and the Internet). The result is a deficiency in the use of the Internet and other digital tools among the majority of respondents in both samples. Even in middle schools, there was some evidence of internet problems, and this was not solely a problem for low-income schools. This was most evident in the school libraries' spaces. This happened because, in libraries, they can face the additional constraints of having

to implement projects in a non-formal environment, sometimes with low digital and human resources and skills to work with it.

One of the interviewees, who is from a deprived-area school and who has been working in the same school for twenty-four years, clearly identifies problems in using digital tools. She gives an example of an essay about family genealogy that some students had to make and where she had to help them. These students had to use magazine pictures to make the genealogy of their family (so that they would not have to use real photographs), but they did not have access to updated material both in school and at home. The librarian helped them by using very old magazines with outdated pictures. This school is an example of how social disadvantages can have a considerable influence on different societal aspects, at home and school, and particularly with digital progress.

This is something that was recently (and because of COVID-19) exposed in the Portuguese society. Now it could be seen that some families do not have access to digital devices, and that often happens in contexts where schools also have less access to digital devices. That is nothing new, but it is now more visible.

“In the breaks, they came to the library to have a chance to work on the computer. To play, they have few reading habits, as we, at school, do not have tablets, we cannot seduce them with digital reading. We have an activity of five minutes of reading; it’s a grain of sand. Nevertheless, before they go to play on the Internet, they have to read for five minutes. There are kids—even in ninth grade—who have a hard time reading.” (I 14, low-income-area schoolteacher)

1.1. Challenges to surpass in context

As noticed in the research, the space of school libraries and media projects is relevant to analyse how schools use digital environments. In informal activities, we can better perceive how the exercises are done and why. This was specially addressed in the semi-structured interviews. We found in teachers’ answers their fears of using the Internet in the school context and their goodwill to implement digital tasks, even without the feeling of having a good knowledge to do so.

MONOGRÁFICO

Teachers' options are sometimes driven by fear, instead of by the relevance that digital tools could have in improving learning environments where students and teachers can work together. They fear both their inadequate self-reported digital skills and also representations of students' use of the digital. Some of the challenges to surpass are the lack of equipment, inadequate quality of internet access, technical limitations in the schools (namely, the number of computers), asymmetry in the relationship that teachers and students have with the use of technologies, and reduced numbers of teachers for diverse tasks. These limitations also challenge the fostering of collaborative tasks among teachers.

"We are careful to try to make them do no-nonsense activities. We are mindful of what they do when online; we say that they [students] cannot use violent games; when they are with the games with shots, we do not let them. Some kids like violent games and, even so, are so quiet... but I don't think we should allow these activities in the library.

Have you ever had a complicated case?

A couple or three years ago some parents came here because someone posted on Facebook of another colleague... parents came here furious and asking to forbid students to use the Internet; they were prohibited from using at home and school, we had to accept their impositions as legal tutors" (I 1, middle-class school teacher)

Adding to the school context, the equipment and quality of internet access can also be a relevant factor in avoiding complex and informal activities supported in digital tools. This can be seen in the examples below. In two schools with hundreds of students, there were six computers at the library, and some of them were not working well, as can be seen in the first example below.

"They access search engines freely; Facebook and YouTube are limited on-site and may provide less school support.

How many computers are there?

This year we have six, but some are blocked.” (I 3, low-income area schoolteacher)

“Sometimes, the Internet is too slow. There are six computers for about 400 students. Then, we have laptops when they need it. In the other libraries of the school group, the situation is similar; the computers are becoming obsolete...”

Do the students ask for help?

No, they don’t. They come intending to do a specific activity. Let’s take class, for example, they already know that there are things they cannot do, such as playing and using social networks; otherwise, there would be conflicts as there have already been.” (I 5, low-income area schoolteacher)

The relationship between teachers and students is still very asymmetric concerning the use of technologies, which we started to notice in the latest interview discourse and below. Some teachers, when referring to students’ digital skills, used the concept of “digital native” (Prensky, 2001). Even if this concept today has been called into question, it is grounded in commonsense knowledge. This idea can also sometimes promote the setbacks of teachers that keep considering their work in digital technologies in a negative and asymmetric form.

“Do students, when they come to the library, often ask questions about the Internet?”

No, I don’t think they ask much. Maybe the students might have doubts, but perhaps they also believe they know more than we do. I think that’s it! Sometimes, mostly the little, when they ask, and are amazed that we know the answer... After all, you know... but the older ones don’t ask; they think they’re more empowered than we are.

Can you specify?

They master techniques very well, but there are other aspects more of the field of ethics and critical thinking that are not so skilled. Libraries are also significant so that students who do not have access to technologies at home can have [them] in school". (I 1, middle-class schoolteacher)

As we can see in this above quote, teachers have the sense that young people have to improve their critical skills. Apart from the technologies, the schools also have to deal with a low number of teachers, specifically that work in school libraries.

"We now have four libraries in the school group and are all networked. This one has about 388 students. We were once two librarians; now it's just me. I just have a colleague who helps me, helps me a lot, and I have other colleagues that have some hours on their schedule to be here. It's hard to maintain and the fluid timeline for different activities." (I 12, low-income area schoolteacher)

"I feel like saying that nowadays we all use the media, but we know little about handling them...We're not educated for that...we are far from knowing everything or a lot... teachers have no training.

Are media a priority in schools?

No. I'm sorry, but they're not. In my discipline, I try to use a lot...We don't have them in the classroom, but I bring them here to the computer...for the Internet, here it is not easy to manage them in the same way...but it has positive aspects. What I see is that in addition to technical capabilities, they highlight problems, such as not putting the source... And directly copy even with the Brazilian..." (I 2, middle-class schoolteacher).

A teacher from an upper-class middle school defines the problem of the use of technology and the lack of adaptation of the school system to the twenty-first century. She faces this in a school that is one of the best in Greater Porto, in a

middle upper-class area, and she can face challenges even if they are lower than in the previous school she worked.

“We have 19th-century buildings, 20th-century teachers and 21st-century students. The room still has that formal look; it’s formatted. Take the media into the living room, only if it’s the paper” (I 6, middle upper-class schoolteacher).

“[In my previous school] we didn’t even have Internet in the library, now they have, but bad access, here is one of the Achilles’ heels, we only have four computers and the Internet does not always work. You can’t use other mobile equipment here...” (I 6, middle upper-class schoolteacher).

Collaborative work (among teachers and between teachers and students) might also be a challenge in the context of non-formal learning at school.

“In this case, we are living a utopia. We’re looking backwards and imagining that we have what we don’t have. What I think is that we’re...There are several objections to collaborative work. We have an education system in which you work for exams. Teachers do not change their working methods because they are focused on goals. The results imply an educational system with a type of classes that do not allow many gaps; teachers are drowned between the goals and the program and bureaucracies. To get open to another type of work when the system is not predisposed to this is to want almost the impossible, one asks a librarian who must work in a little systematised way. On the other hand, our equipment...There’s no money for anything. In the school library, there are nine computers for 1,200 students, and today, I have six computers working. No, no, no.” (I 9, middle-class schoolteacher)

Sometimes, teachers are also tightening or restricting their rules regarding internet access, while others try to avoid following the rules that, in some cases, can change from school to school. The paradigm is that rules primarily depend on the school and the teacher.

“No, [they can’t access freely]. To begin with that, they cannot go to Facebook; sometimes, they do it when they are here with the teacher, and they are doing work

MONOGRÁFICO

on Facebook. Now Facebook is also an educational and practice tool. But, when they come alone, they must not go on Facebook, so there's this rule. But they can access to YouTube.

Why this distinction?

I think Facebook is used more negatively. Just a few years ago, there was a case where they published photographs of colleagues, and it was terrible ... it's not prejudiced but a negative experience. When they're on Facebook without studying, they have to close it. On YouTube, they watch a video; we just ask not to view video, games and violent music. We have phones for them to put. Many boys here have no computer at home, and this is the opportunity they have to have contact with these technologies" (I 14, low-income-area schoolteacher).

One of the interviewees who works at the headquarters of the RBE, an institution with a long and solid commitment to the work of school libraries and also their connection to media literacy, pointed out the need to continuously improve the processes while considering the double dimensions of face-to-face and online atmospheres.

"Given that the environment of information sources, if we use the media in a broader sense, the Internet as media, social networks, the devices themselves, the tablet, the mobile phone ... the information reaches us more and more via these devices. Our own experience of socialisation takes place on two levels, within what we would say of people's physical space and time and the culture of virtuality, space and virtual time and virtual socialisation, we live in these two worlds" (I 8)

In the last decade, there was a significant effort with the improvement of conditions of digital and media literacy learning environments at compulsory school (in Portugal, until the 12th grade) namely with the RBE referential (Conde, Mendinhos, & Correia, 2017; Conde, Mendinhos, Correia, & Martins, 2012) and, as previously indicated, with the Media Education Referential. The evaluation of the RBE's implementation demonstrates that among three areas of development—literacy of reading, literacy of information, and media literacy—the last one is the less developed in school libraries. Given this subject, the interviewee from RBE said:

“Reading today is done in several sections; literacy today implies digital and media literacy. It’s transverse. The Network, the tablet, the smartphone, the reading left the book holder and walks around [laughs]. In our devices that are already indispensable to us. On the other hand, information and media literacy don’t live without each other, do they? The information arrives via the Internet and new media...the interpretation of the content of the message is not separable from information literacy. Now, as for the media, we have to go further and think about the media and the factors that condition the development of the area in schools.”

2. Journalistic inspiration

The question of how journalistic tools are introduced at school is relevant for thinking of, and implementing, projects that can foster critical thinking, with emphasis on journalism’s democratic values. Given the third decade of the new millennium and the context of disinformation, the social challenge of the question is perhaps more significant than before. According to Clark (2013, p. 1)

the task of journalism education has been defined in relation to both the professional needs of the journalism industry and the need to educate well-informed citizens. A key part of journalism education involves introducing the [...] professional ideology of journalism, which includes commitments to public service, commitments to impartiality or objectivity, and a belief in the ideal of journalistic autonomy

This implies the role of journalists in the promotion of critical knowledge among young people, particularly at school (V. M. Tomé, 2008).

In this context, it is contemplated that the role of researchers working in areas of media and media education, including professionals in the field, such as journalists (Brites et al., 2017), is of great support for teachers, not only in the implementation of projects but also in the transference of knowledge that can be useful in working with young people (Clark & Monserrate, 2011).

MONOGRÁFICO

Based on the samples, we could see that some of the teachers had already used news in school contexts. For news analysis, think about writing a journalistic narrative or associating the news with specific meanings of the program (“Let us extend our knowledge to the use of the media in school and the school activity.” R 9, FQ). Besides, given a more linear use of journalism in training sessions, we were dedicated to thinking about journalistic cultures, news production environments, and inherent democratic values and how they could be considered in school contexts. Eventually, these ideas became unusual settings for trainees and made an influence on critical thinking about a society complexed with the abundance of information that might not always be credible.

These sessions had a substantial impact. Participants considered that they ended up knowing very little about these journalistic cultures, such as how the newsroom works. The processes of journalistic context, in short, is about what is considered to be newsmaking and to realise that the use of tools used by journalists can have an outstanding educational potential (Brites et al., 2017). This specific context of training and the final questionnaire eventually revealed future potential.

“Learning how to develop varied skills with students, using news and leading students to implement a methodology similar to those used in journalism.” (R6, FQ)

“A greater understanding of how one does things and how they can be useful to work with students.” (R13, FQ)

“I wish I could learn more journalistic techniques that might be useful in teaching the discipline I teach.” (R11, FQ)

This component more oriented towards journalism was also associated with the logic of relationship with the dynamics related to citizenship:

“Continuing to develop creative, inclusive projects, contributing to the training of responsible citizens.” (R6, FQ)

2.1. Democratic values of journalism at school?

School journalism was one of the most relevant forms of juvenile participation in Portugal in the era of the print (Brites, 2015; V. M. Tomé, 2008). However, it seems to be a bit lost in the digital age. The media literacy program Público na Escola (the oldest media literacy program in Portugal) promoted an environment for these types of school journalism programs (Brites, 2015). These school journalism environments are pretty much dependent on the goodwill of the teachers, so it happens that the projects might open and close as the school promoter changes school.

“When the colleague left the school, did the school newspapers continue to run?”

The newspaper existed while she was here [smiles].

Are these school journalism projects dependent on who’s ahead of them?

Yes, I think this colleague was doing a master’s or PhD in the field, and this project had to do with this work.

Should a school go further and have these projects as structural?

Yes, I think it should, but there needs to be someone who has availability of hours and also a lot of personal hours dedicated to the task. Then it requires the collaboration of the students, and this does not always happen” (I 2, middle-class schoolteacher).

Some teachers even report that they have done several news projects at school, and at different schools, they worked over the years. This is the case of this teacher that worked in school newspapers, as well as in collaboration with a professional newspaper outside of school. This same teacher also worked at the school radio in close relation to an online radio station that had already been a part of the community for some years. It was a radio station that was mostly run by children and young people in the context of a research project (RadioActive Europe).

MONOGRÁFICO

“We had to buy the radio station devices, but then we didn’t have room to store the equipment; that’s where the work was done and where it was issued... We tried the association of students, but the participation was sporadic. I felt that the students were not always available. It is a lot of work.” (I 11, low-income area schoolteacher)

One good example that is unusual in the national context is the case of a teacher that, since the beginning of his profession in the 90s, started to work in the field of media literacy. By chance, at the beginning of his teaching career as a Portuguese and French teacher, he was assigned to teach introductory journalism, which, at that time, was a compulsory course for students in humanities. Afterwards, he completed some training in technology to start a discipline in technology and communication. This was the first step towards the implementation of a discipline called techniques for communication and diffusion that implied the creation of online radio at school. After some years, in 2003, he transferred to another school and started a new project. The discipline by that time was called Communication Workshop and had taken over the radio and the school newspaper. The project was very successful, and in 2013, the name was changed to Media Education. It is a formal and informal school project. He has the chance to have an exact place in the curriculum to address this challenge, that every year captures different students and teachers. He took this challenge very seriously, and he is very proud that, over more than 20 years, some of his students have become communications professionals such as journalists. With pride, he says, *“I’m sure I left something in these students, some of them opted for professional activities in advertising, in design... others are teachers. The students felt with freedom and creativity; they felt well”* (I 13, small-town schoolteacher).

One of the things this teacher highlight is that, throughout his teaching career, he has been lucky to work with school boards that have supported him in his intentions. Otherwise, everything could have been different.

The Radio Impact, which is one of the oldest to operate uninterruptedly in schools since 1998, introduced the use of radio sound as a substitute for the traditional ring bells during breaks. The intervals are regulated by radio. If the radio does not work, there is no ringing. The intervals are usually noisy, especially in

those who are the youngest. Many kids do not leave the aisles and stay there with their headphones, and the radio ends up having to listen and share. As the teacher says happily: *“I walk in the halls, and sometimes they’re all singing the song that is playing on the school radio”* (I 13, small-town schoolteacher).

Discussions and conclusions

This exploratory research aimed to reflect on the real contexts of teachers’ work with digital environments and critical thought, inspired by journalism contexts. One could think that digital development would foster this connection to journalism-related realms (Clark & Marchi, 2017), but that has not happened in recent years.

The current and unprecedented situation of the COVID-19 pandemic opened society’s eyes to the circumstances facing teachers, students, and families, many of whom hardly know how to work with digital and technological environments and might not even have access to them. When making the transition to online teaching, there was significant and relevant correspondence from teachers and students. However, it was made clear that some students, who are considered digital natives and in a higher position in regard to teachers as we saw before and in the analysis, are in a disadvantaged position about digital tools. This is why the Portuguese Government and municipalities felt the need to provide some children with new computers or to find places in the schools for them to attend online classes since attending classes online at home was impossible. Also, it was relevant to note that the Telescola, learning and extensive national program through television for decades (1965–1987), had now to be reinvented and reintroduced to surpass the lack of Internet and equipment of some families. Now, with the new name #StudyingAtHome, the classes are at the same course through the television in the channel RTP Memória. This is a previous model of TV that now, given the COVID 19, is again needed.

The research questions are placed in the context of the complexities of the third decade of the new millennium and the meaning of disinformation, as well as the democratic and critical environments needed at school and in the framework of an asymmetric digital process: (1) How are digital tools perceived at school? (2) How are journalistic tools considered at school?

Concerning the first question, and even if it was not our intention to give a negative view on what is happening at schools and ensuring that there are positive examples, we relied upon the questionnaires and semi-structured interviews that pointed out some challenges that need to be addressed. We could identify that teachers sometimes act more driven by fears of their (precepted low-powered) use of the digital tools and the students' (precepted overpowered) uses of the digital devices. Besides, it was recognised as a more structural problem related to the lack of equipment and the quality of internet access, technical limitations of the schools (number of computers and quality of the internet access), the low number of teachers for diverse tasks (including administration and a broad curriculum that needs to be addressed). These situations imply and, consequently, limit the probability of fostering collaborative tasks among teachers and students.

Regarding the possible increase and usage of tools for journalistic inspiration at school to promote a more democratic and critical activity for students, it was not found as the revitalisation of other historical times. Nevertheless, we could see some very positive and inspiring examples. The enormous challenges are in some form related to the previous ones. We can add that these tasks are dependent on the teachers willing to promote these types of projects and that there is no systematic use of these possibilities for the school year, as it happened before, including the promotion of inspirational democratic values of the Carnation Revolution (Brites, 2015). As could be expected, a direct and substantial relationship between the expansion of digital technologies and projects that promote systematic critical thinking was not found.

Improving the knowledge of what is happening in the digital realm and its challenges (boyd, 2014) can be considered relevant in the context of a deeply media-tised society (Couldry & Hepp, 2017). Also, one possible form of promoting these contexts is to discuss media and media education access as a right (Frau-Meigs, 2017; García-Ruiz et al., 2016; Pereira et al., 2014; UNESCO, 1982; Vários, 2011). This could promote a culture of reflecting and contemplating media and specific digital environments in the context of the society where we live.

Acknowledgements

This work was funded through the Science and Technology Foundation (SFRH / BPD / 92204/2013).

Referencias

- Aguaded, I., Sandoval-Romero, Y., & Rodriguez-Rosell, M.-M. (2016). Media literacy from international organizations in Europe and Latin America. *The Journal of Media Literacy*, 63(1&2), 10-17.
- boyd, d. (2014). *It's complicated* New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Brites, M. J. (2015). *Jovens e culturas cívicas: Por entre formas de consumo noticioso e de participação*. Covilhã: LabCom Books.
- Brites, M. J., Amaral, I., & Catarino, F. (2018). A era das “fake news”: o digital storytelling como promotor do pensamento crítico. *Journal of Digital Media & Interaction*, 1(1), 85-98. Retrieved from <http://revistas.ua.pt/index.php/jdmi/article/view/11142>
- Brites, M. J., & Pinto, M. (2017). Is there a role for the news industry in improving news literacy? *MERJ - Media Education Research Journal*, 7(2), 29-46.
- Brites, M. J., Santos, S. C., Jorge, A., & Catalão, D. (2017). Ferramentas jornalísticas na educação: Uma rádio online para jovens. *Sociologia, problemas e práticas*, 84, 81-100. doi:10.7458/SPP2017846102
- Clark, L. S. (2013). Cultivating the media activist: How critical media literacy and critical service learning can reform journalism education. *Journalism*, 1-19.
- Clark, L. S., & Marchi, R. (2017). *Young people and the future of news*. New York, Melbourne, Delhi, Singapore: Cambridge University Press.
- Clark, L. S., & Monserrate, R. (2011). High school journalism and the making of young citizens. *Journalism*, 12(4), 417-432.
- Conde, E., Mendinhos, I., & Correia, P. (2017). *Aprender com a biblioteca escolar: Referencial de aprendizagens associadas ao trabalho das bibliotecas escolares na educação pré-escolar e nos ensinos básico e secundário (2.ª edição, revista e aumentada)*. Retrieved from http://www.rbe.min-edu.pt/np4/file/1906/referencial_2017.pdf

MONOGRÁFICO

- Conde, E., Mendinhos, I., Correia, P., & Martins, R. (2012). *Aprender com a biblioteca escolar: Referencial de aprendizagens associadas ao trabalho das bibliotecas escolares na Educação Pré-escolar e no Ensino Básico*. Retrieved from [http://www.rbe.min-edu.pt/np4/np4/?newsId=681&fileName=Aprender com a biblioteca escolar.pdf](http://www.rbe.min-edu.pt/np4/np4/?newsId=681&fileName=Aprender+com+a+biblioteca+escolar.pdf)
- Couldry, N., & Hepp, A. (2017). *The Mediated Construction of Reality*. Cambridge, USA: Polity Press.
- Eleá, I., & Mikos, L. (2017). The Classe: Living and Learning in the Digital Age, interview with Sonia Livingstone. In I. Eleá & L. Mikos (Eds.), *Young & creative*. Gothenburg: The International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media.
- Fernández-Cruz, F.-J., & Fernández-Díaz, M.-J. (2016). Generation Z's Teachers and their Digital Skills. *Comunicar*, 46(XXIV), 97-105. doi:10.3916/C46-2016-10
- Frau-Meigs, D. (2017). Media and Information Literacy (MIL): Taking the digital social turn for online freedoms and education 3.0. . In H. Tumber & S. Waisbord (Eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Media and Human Rights* (pp. s/d). London: Routledge.
- García-Ruiz, R., Matos, A., & Borges, G. (2016). Media Literacy as a responsibility of families and teachers. *The Journal of Media Literacy*, 63(1&2), 82-91.
- Hobbs, R. (2016). *Epilogue*. In R. Hobbs (Ed.), *Exploring the roots of digital and media literacy through personal narrative*. Philadelphia: Temple.
- Jenkins, H. (2006). *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. Nova Iorque e Londres: New York University Press.
- Mihailidis, P. (2012). Introduction: News literacy in the Dawn of a Hypermedia Age'. In P. Mihailidis (Ed.), *News literacy: global perspectives for the newsroom and the classroom* (pp. 1-17). Nova Iorque, Washington DC, Berna, Frankfurt, Berlim, Viena e Oxford: Peter Lang.
- Pereira, S., Pinto, M., Madureira, E. J., Pombo, T., & Guedes, M. (2014). *Referencial de Educação para os Media para a Educação Pré-escolar, o Ensino Básico e o Ensino Secundário*. Retrieved from http://www.dge.mec.pt/sites/default/files/ficheiros/referencial_educacao_media_2014.pdf
- Pérez-Tornero, J. M., & Tayie, S. (2012). Teacher Training in Media Education: Curriculum and International Experiences. *Comunicar*, 39(XX), 10-14. doi:10.3916/C39-2012-02-00

- Pfaff-Rüdiger, S., & Riesmeyer, C. (2016). Moved into action. Media literacy as social process. *Journal of Children and Media*, 10(2), 164-172. doi:10.1080/17482798.2015.1127838
- Pinto, M., & Pereira, S. (2018). Experiências, Perceções e Expectativas da Formação de Professores em Educação para os Media em Portugal. *Revista Interuniversitaria de Formación del Profesorado*, 91(32.1), 83-103.
- Prensky, M. (2001). Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants Part 1. *On the Horizon*, 9(5), 1-6.
- Romero, Y. S., & Gómez, J. I. A. (2012). Nuevas audiencias, nuevas responsabilidades *ICONO 14*, 10(3), 08-22. Retrieved from <https://icono14.net/ojs/index.php/icono14/article/view/197/374>
- Scheibe, C. (2009). "Sounds Great, But I Don't Have Time!": Helping Teachers Meet Their Goals and Needs With Media Literacy Education. *Journal of Media Literacy Education*, 1, 68-71.
- Tomé, V. (2016). Media Education in Portuguese Curricula. *The Journal of Media Literacy*, 63(1-2), 42-49.
- Tomé, V. M. (2008). "Vamos fazer jornais escolares": um contributo para o desenvolvimento da educação para os médias em Portugal. Universidade de Lisboa, Lisboa.
- UNESCO. (1982). Grunwald Declaration on Media Education. Retrieved from <https://milunesco.unaoc.org/mil-resources/grunwald-declaration-on-media-education/>. from UNESCO <https://milunesco.unaoc.org/mil-resources/grunwald-declaration-on-media-education/>
- Vários. (2011). Declaração de Braga sobre Literacia para os Media. Retrieved from <http://milobs.pt/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Declaração-de-Braga-de-Literacia-dos-Media.pdf>. <http://milobs.pt/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Declaração-de-Braga-de-Literacia-dos-Media.pdf>



Este obra está bajo una licencia de [Creative Commons Reconocimiento 4.0 Internacional](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).