

Editorial

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Media Literacy Training in Graduate and Postgraduate Studies

La formación en grados y posgrados para la alfabetización mediática

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The all-embracing presence of the media in society today makes it increasingly necessary for people to be trained to deal with their output. The active consumption of media, an understanding of their codes, the development of a critical outlook and a knowledgeable stance in the face of persuasive messages have all become an urgent necessity.

Media literacy is now a priority for international organizations such as the Council of Europe, the European Parliament, the UN and UNESCO, as well as for numerous countries that have incorporated civic training into their school curricula. This is just a start, indeed some regions have seen more reverses than advances as lawmakers misunderstand the scope and democratic implications of media literacy or fear the consequences of facing citizens who are more demanding, participative and active, in short...free.

All experts agree that the key to media literacy lies in education at home, the new generations, students and even media professionals and politicians. Raising awareness and education are the best ways to generate the skills in communication to confront the challenges thrown down by today's media in their various forms: audiovisual, telematic, digital...

Comunicar, in its issue number 33, regretted the missed opportunity in Spain to develop nationwide teacher training plans in which media literacy is more than just a novelty subject and which carries more weight. The journal points to various examples of good media literacy practice in Latin America and Europe for graduate and postgraduate students of Educommunication. These programmes are the launch pad

for training professional educommunicators. Their aim is to develop an integrated civic education in audiovisual and media competence that is vital for the critical consolidation of the social fabric and as a bulwark of democracy.

At graduate level, we review an international experience from the Universidade de São Paulo (Brazil), in a degree course in Educommunication (www.cca.eca.usp.br) that was the initiative of the Comunicação e Educação journal of the School of Arts and Communications at the same university.

For postgraduates, we examine the courses on offer at various Spanish universities that fall within the new European model. These have kept the education of educommunicators alive in this country despite its negligible presence in graduate study plans, both in terms of training university and secondary school teachers and at the faculties of communication.



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We acknowledge the importance of the International Master in Communication and Education (www.gabinetecomunicacionyeducacion.com/formacion) at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, directed by Professor Pérez Tornero, which has been going for over a decade and is highly regarded in Latin America, where versions of the same are imparted in Argentina and Chile, attended by students from across the continent.

Honourable mention also goes to the Master courses developed by the UNED, Spain's National University of Distance Education, linked to technologies and educommunication: the Master in Communication and Education on the Net: from the Information Society to the Knowledge Society (www.ntedu-uned.es/comeducared/?page_id=6), directed by Professor Aparici; and the Master in Technologies for Education and Knowledge (www.uned.es/infoedu), led by Professors Gallego and Alonso. To add to these established experiences, we now have a new interuniversity Master in Audiovisual Communication and Education (www.uhu.es/master-educomunicacion) from the Universidad de Huelva and the UNIA (International University of Andalusia) which, as an official post-graduate certificate of excellence, complements rather than competes with the ideals inherent in the other courses on offer.

This new official Master is specifically aimed at media professionals (journalists and broadcasters) and teaching professionals (teachers and professors), and all those who are interested in the phenomena of media and technology in the new knowledge society context. The world of Communication is in immediate need of an ethical and educational focus; at the same time, Education requires technological and media tools to improve teaching quality and to give it direction and a viable future in modern society.

The merging of Communication, Education and Educommunication is essential for fomenting a more democratic, responsible and critical citizenry. The training of educommunicators, experts in Media Education, is the lynchpin of this International Postgraduate course which in its first year (2010/11) is open to students worldwide, especially those from Latin American and European countries, with support from international organizations and visiting professors from Cuba, Venezuela, Colombia, Argentina, Chile, Mexico, Portugal, etc. In short, it is a prestigious interuniversity and international Master.

