

Autor: Tornero, José Manuel Pérez.

Titel: Youth Media Education: Perspectives and Strategies.

Quelle: UNESCO: MENTOR. A Media Education Curriculum for Teachers in the Mediterranean. The Thesis of Thessaloniki, First Version, March 2003 (CD ci.com series). 2003. P. 1-18.

Verlag: UNESCO.

Published with kind permission of the UNESCO.

José Manuel Pérez Tornero

Youth Media Education: Perspectives and Strategies

Brussels, January 2003.

Introduction

According to the UNESCO's definition, media education "*enables people to gain understanding of the communication media used in their society and the way they operate and to acquire skills in using these media to communicate with others*" (UNESCO, 1999, Vienna Conference "Educating for the Media and the Digital Age").

In my point of view, the task would consist of pedagogically promoting a constructively critical, conscious dialogue with the communication media to explore the new and old possibilities that they can offer.

Understood as a dialogue, media education ought to result in a two-pronged process over the short and medium term. First of all, the formation of a critical and participatory awareness regarding "the media"; and secondly, a progressive acceptance on the part of the media of a deep involvement with education.

But beyond that, over the long term and in a broader sense, the task of media education has to do with collective intelligence, with the models of knowledge and understanding developed in our culture.

In this broader sense, as Mexican writer Carlos Fuentes said of books (a communication medium, after all):

“un libro nos enseña a extender simultáneamente el entendimiento de nuestra propia persona, el entendimiento del mundo objetivo fuera de nosotros y el entendimiento del mundo social donde se reúne la ciudad – la polis – y el ser humano – la persona”

(Fuentes, C.: 2002, p. 171). “Books teach us to simultaneously extend our understandings of ourselves, of the objective world beyond us, and of the social sphere that unites the city – the *polis* – and the human being – the person.”

From this point of view, the media – like books – act as extensions of our understanding (that is, of our perceptions, as McLuhan claimed, but also of our language and our reasoning).

Consequently, far from being merely a discipline that refers to the communication media as a set of instruments, media education must be recognised as a monumental philosophical and epistemological task that affects our consciousness as human beings and our facet as citizens:

“Media Education is part of the basic entitlement of every citizen, in every country in the world, to freedom of expression and the right to information and is instrumental in building and sustaining democracy.” (UNESCO, 1999, Vienna Conference “Educating for the Media and the Digital Age”)

If this is indeed the case, can education wash its hands of the media? Or the media of education? In both cases, they could, but they should not, because this lack of interest could translate into an impoverishment of human intelligence (that is: of perception, imagination and reason) and an abandonment of language and dialogue (that is: of meaning, expression and co-operation), and a disdain for our dimension as citizens of democratic societies.

Returning to Fuentes (2002: 172): “Si nosotros no hablamos, el silencio impondrá su oscura soberanía”. (“If we do not speak, silence will impose its dark sovereignty.”)

The Communication Media as a Cognitive Environment, a Common Meeting Ground

By taking up this focus on media education as a *pedagogy of knowledge and of citizenship* we are implicitly defending the idea that the media, in the times we live in, play

a key role in people's knowledge of the world and in fact provide a sphere that shapes how relationships among citizens are forged. This focus presupposes that we have gone beyond considering the media as mere instruments used by certain segments of society to achieve pre-existing objectives.

We believe that the situation is far more complex. As a result of their proliferation and penetration into every corner of daily and social life, the media in present-day society create a milieu, an atmosphere, a compelling, absorbing space within which a specific *episteme* or form of knowledge and understanding reigns. Their all-pervading influence is even capable of creating certain types of social agents that would not exist, or at any rate would not flourish as they do, without the media to provide them with a sustaining milieu. The media create a system of social relationships and chains of causes and effects that alone sustain many dimensions of our reality.

Constructs such as the "information society," the "network-society" (Castells, 1999), the "society of knowledge," "post-modern society," etc., are all built on the way the media sphere has been evolving. All of these constructs point to the constituting power of the media, to their capacity to set new conditions and circumstances under which knowledge and social relations develop. Their proponents unanimously insist that due to their overwhelming importance in society, the media have transcended their role as mere instruments to become an omnipresent conditioning force on individuals in their social and cultural contexts. The media have become a milieu, a climate in which we live and move; our medium of existence. Although they served and still serve as instruments, we cannot forget that these instruments have ended up shaping the way we are; these instruments may be turning us humans into their appendices.

Therefore, the kind of media education that we need now must go beyond the confines of pedagogical instruments; it must, we insist, be considered a conscientious effort to seize and improve the conditions in which we develop the social faculties of comprehension, intelligence, dialogue, and civic relations.

Media Education's "Ultimate Agenda"

Education in the 21st century must therefore be profoundly interested in the media, and the media cannot, by any means, ignore education. Media and education must go hand in

hand; the goals of this dialogue and co-operation – in other words, media education – would be:

- To increase personal and collective **intelligence** through and with the media.
- To achieve a better **understanding of the natural world (ecology)**, and a better **understanding of ourselves**, “learning to be” as persons, and learning to understand others on the social plane.
- To foster **dialogue** among persons, to promote balanced relationships, mutual respect and tolerance, and greater co-operation among different groups, searching for ways to jointly resolve problems through *civic participation*.
- To learn to **create new possible worlds**; that is, to imagine critically and dream of future alternatives.

This agenda has, explicitly or not, been the “ultimate agenda” in the long evolution of human languages taking place over the centuries, with all their crises and vicissitudes. It has also been the agenda in what throughout history we could call media education *avant la lettre*: rhetoric, the teaching of writing, of expression through visual arts, of aesthetics and artistic creation—all of these disciplines that have been and continue to be conditions for and causes of the appearance of new communication media.

Encounters

If we accept these objectives, media education in today’s world should be the fruit of a double encounter:

- On the one hand, the encounter we could call the **human potential for constructing meaning**, which in fact brings together all the abilities and instruments with which humanity has broadened its awareness, making its reason, its languages (its ability to name and interact with the world) and its imaginative, symbolic and expressive capabilities progress.
- On the other hand, there is a second encounter in the cognitive field of **knowledge applied to the construction of meaning**; the encounter between the **disciplines applied to human languages and express**, that is, all the sciences or fields of knowledge that have always been concerned with understanding, directing, organising or encouraging humans’ capabilities for expression and understanding. From writing to hermeneutics; from the philosophy of language to aesthetics; from rhetoric to computer science; from linguistics to information theory.

In my opinion, this double encounter should always occur within a Socratic pedagogy, that is, within a dialogue capable of extracting from each person what he or she holds within; a dialogue capable of extending the freedom inside the person outside to the *polis*.

The initial appearance of these objectives and encounters is perhaps their ambition and heterogeneity. How will it be possible to unite and conjoin capabilities as disparate as cognitive, interactive, expressive and imaginative abilities on the one hand, and unite and make compatible disciplines and fields of knowledge as heteroclitic a rhetoric, hermeneutics, aesthetics, semiotics, literary criticism, computer science, and information theory? Is this not really reason's wishful thinking?

I do not think so. It is not a dream but a real possibility that now, at this precise moment in time, is more feasible than ever because the progress linked with information society, new technologies and information symbols are creating the conditions needed to make these encounters possible.

The Convergence and Unification of Languages

UNESCO's definition of media education was put forth as a unifying effort to approach the plurality of languages and media: *"Deals with all communication media and includes the word and graphics, sound, the still as well as the moving image, delivered on any kind of technology"* (Recommendations of the 1999 Vienna Conference and the 2002 Seville Seminar).

Nowadays, the unification of languages and media is a fact that allows for digitalisation, computer science and distance technologies. For the first time in history, a language or expression, regardless of its nature – audio, visual, linguistic, numerical, spatial – can be converted into digital formulas, that is, its expressions can be digitalised and thus virtually transformed, transmitted and modified. What has thus been achieved is the convertability, and in a certain sense, the unification of languages. This allows us to sense and seriously consider the profoundly homogeneous and *unified* nature of all languages. It allows us to discover and learn about their structures, their systems of meaning. It also allows us to enrich languages with other languages and recombine them. And it also enables us to discover new relationships and create new expressive, communicative situations. In other

words, this **encounter between many languages in the construction of meaning** is already taking place.

This same encounter is also taking place through the work of *digital unification* in the communication media and their means of transmission. The line between the old media and technologies is becoming fuzzy. There no longer exist the technologies of painting and sculpture, printing and the book on the one hand; and the press, radio and sound, cinema and television and computers on the other; rather, they are all becoming unified in **multimedia technology**, which is able to unite and combine all the possibilities of pre- and post-digital media. Multimedia technology is being encouraged thanks to the progress being made in distance technology, which allows us to transcend the limitations imposed by the old media and give them a new, previously unknown versatility and flexibility, which in turn encourages the unification of communication in time and space (which in another perspective is called the globalisation of communication). This unity is reminiscent of the Aleph, that idea of the Argentine, Borges, who presents us with the existence of a point (the Aleph) in which singular unification, encounter and coincidence of all times, places, images and realities takes place.

There are also encounters and convergence in the disciplines and fields of knowledge dealing with meaning. As these disciplines have emerged throughout history, they did so, consciously or not, along with a communication medium, a specific medium in a certain context: rhetoric with the words *agora* and forum; hermeneutics with the sacred texts; literary criticism with poetry and other literary genres and with the book; aesthetics with the original art forms; semiotics with oral language and other symbolic systems; computer science with digital numbering, etc. But from the moment in which we sense and understand, rationally but also a technologically and practically, that all these disciplines share a common foundation, that they all revolve around the same objective – meaning and communication – at this very moment, the path toward encounter and convergence is foretold. It is a merely question of time, and it requires decisive action. It occurs, in fact, both practically – infographics, programming, multimedia creation – and theoretically – semiotics, cultural studies, ethno-methodology, epistemology, etc. It allows for a new comprehension of the phenomena of communication and the process of construction meaning.

Far from being the result of a forced unification, this double encounter – of languages and systems of transmission on the one hand, and of disciplines that study the construction of meaning and communication on the other – has occurred spontaneously and in response to the *esprit du temps* of our modern information society. It is not a unification that attempts to homogenise everything, that crushes the specific, unique possibilities of each languagemedium or each discipline, but it appears more as progress in dialogue and interdisciplinarity, as an enrichment that respects the unique values of the time that enables our knowledge to grow. It is a dialogue among languages, media, and disciplines that are enriched through their mutual contact and their inter-textual play (like mirrors facing each other), that produce perspectives and a *mise-en-abyme*. Taken as a whole, it is a convergence that opens up possibilities of syncretism, plurality and flexibility that characterise the ideal style for media education.

The media education of our time can be founded on this plural convergence: as a point of encounter and co-operation that is based on a new epistemological and technological point of view, and that allows for the creation of a new type of awareness.

A Policy: The Balance Between Protection and Autonomy

However, in addition to a unique philosophy of knowledge and a conception of human consciousness as a possibility for understanding the discernment, media education also involves certain civic-political conceptions. In this sense, media education should be viewed in relation to the two poles of action that are presented at times as contradictory and at times as complementary. At one extreme is the pole that focuses on a consideration of individual freedom and autonomy; at the other is the pole that accents the need to establish social rules for protecting individual and collective rights.

Education media has arisen at the crossroads of these two poles. In fact, it has been developed in ambivalent situations, as we shall see. On the one hand it is related to the desire to unleash the potentialities – both instrumental and cognitive – of new media for individual and human self-realisation. Throughout history, every time a new medium has appeared, it has aroused visions of utopias and optimistic prophecies about its potentialities.

On the other hand, it is also related to prevention, perhaps even to the fear aroused by the power attributed to these media, and the resulting need to regulate and control their expansion and use. In this second sense, for example, we can frequently find media education associated with a feeling of vulnerability – on the part of children or citizens – when faced with media, and the resulting need to regulate and protect.

Generally speaking, the discourse on trust in the progress of each persons' autonomous freedom to develop his or her potentialities pertains to an optimistic attitude toward developments in communication – that the media will not cease to become more prevalent. Conversely, the reserved and defensive attitude that goes with actions to protect against the possible negative effects of the media pertains to a pessimistic attitude toward some developments in new media.

This ambivalence is frequently mixed with impulses from the market and states. Generally speaking, market forces, which promote new technologies and above all new ways of consumption associated with them, are allied with the optimistic and *liberalising* impulses of innovation, with the will to take advantage of the new media possibilities, and they frequently convert the discourse on the media into a prophecy of well-being and felicity. As is obvious, they tend to minimise the possible dysfunctions and highlight the positive aspects. Within this context, any regulation, limitation or reservation on the market development of the media is perceived as a barrier. They are thus against any measures protecting individuals or groups against the media.

On the other hand, states are attuned to any gap or failure in the market, and they tend to highlight citizen rights with regard to the media. To varying degrees they tend to have *regulatory* or *rule-making* attitudes, based frequently on the need to establish areas in which citizens' rights are protected (especially noticeable, for example, with regard to children and young people and the media).

Without dwelling on the topic, we believe that media education should lie in the middle of these two poles. The final objective of media education is to raise individual and collective consciousness and free it from restrictions. It strives to enrich the individual's critical potentialities through his or her capacity for discernment and choice. In this sense, the support for autonomy and its postulates is compatible with the emphasis – both theoretical

or practical – by the defenders of the market on the sovereignty of the individual and his or her ability to choose.

However, while valuing the search for autonomy, both the objectives and the procedures of media education are enriched through the existence of protective regulatory policies. In fact, media education is enhanced by the consolidation of the principles on which these protective regulatory policies tend to be based. These policies frequently focus on ensuring, in practice, the rights of the individual with regard to the media, and on protecting them through laws that offer specific guarantees. With its vigilant attitude toward rights and the protection of vulnerable parties, they end up generating debate, concepts and ideas that contribute to raising awareness of problems with the media in general, and they encourage media education.

In this sense, we can claim that based on their different standpoints, the tension between market discourse and that of the states enhances the development of media education; thus they are compatible. In fact, the search for autonomy that media education so encourages is conceived not only as a end in itself but also as a useful response to likely situations of vulnerability that should be protected against if fundamental rights are to be safeguarded.

The conditions needed for this to occur is that media education must a) know how to maintain a healthy balance between taking advantage of opportunities provided by the new media developments for individual self realisation – declared emphatically by the market discourse, and b) at the same time know how to identify negative aspects through criticism and analysis, and consequently how to encourage agreement and consensus on self-control and regulation.

By maintaining this balance, media education will be a critical exercise in analysis and discernment, equidistant from market optimism and defensive criticism.

Media education's style must, then, combine a realistic recognition of new media possibilities with criticism and the search for alternatives to certain risks presented by the media.

The Development of Media Education

Now that the philosophical and political principles of media are known, we must now proceed to its precise development: How to place and develop media education in the broad space of education in modern societies?

We believe that without a doubt, media education belongs in the sphere of the educational system, yet it must also be involved in other areas, such as the family, civil society and the media space itself.

The incorporation of media education into the educational system first affects the curricula, yet curricula, of learning objectives or content development are not the only issues; it also deeply affects the educational time-space-context. When discussing media education in the family, we will refer not only to instruction by parents or guardians, but also to the uses of the media and their contexts for use, the possibilities they offer and the possibilities they close. We will refer to the dailiness of the home and its media organisation. When discussing civil society, we will be pointing to the relationship between groups and media education, to the conditions for media access and participation and the opinion climates that these conditions can produce. Finally, we must recognise that the media themselves can play a fundamental role when encouraging media education.

Finally, when discussing the media space that could be developed in media education, we will talk about media's *reflexivity*, that is, its capability (or incapability) to refer to itself, to be its own object of interrogation and dialogue, and finally of the possibilities that educational trends should encourage with regard to languages and technologies and their internal procedures.

Below we will suggest development strategies for each of these areas.

Curriculum and Media Education

How can media education be driven forward in the schools? How can we create programmes related to it? What resources will we have? What teachers? And when and in what contexts? A precise answer should start with a detailed consideration of each specific curriculum (see Kate Domaille and David Buckingham, Youth Media Education Survey, November, 2001, UNESCO, Sector of Communication and Information), but some general considerations may be taken into account as well.

Let us begin with elementary and secondary school education. The incorporation of media education, in my opinion, must be two-pronged:

- First, establishing converging cross-curricular contents in different disciplines (already consolidated in the majority of European educational curricula). That is, reinforcing, broadening or focusing contents that have already existed for many years. Among many others, these could include: teaching oral expression and writing, arts education, music education, teaching language and literature, subjects related to social knowledge, computer science, aesthetic expression, art history, technologies, philosophy, teaching classical languages or second or third languages, etc. In each of these areas there will be contents that are related to the media. The idea, then, is to achieve a true systematisation of all these contents, to reach a point where these areas of learning are coherent and, in a certain way, comprehensive. That is, making they comprise a compatible, progressive body of knowledge that ensures a curriculum that is relevant to the students.
- Then, opening up spaces for integration and unification, that is, gradually incorporating the following into the curriculum: a) specific media (or communication) education subjects, b) curricular activities that synthesise knowledge related to media education, such as producing school media (school websites, newspapers, radio or television channels, audio-visual and multimedia productions, platforms for interacting with existing media, etc.).

Its cross-curricular nature implies a combined effort at localisation, comparison, homogenisation, elimination of redundancies, planning; in a word, systematisation.

This is not an easy task. In fact, it must involve a vertical and horizontal review of existing curricula. It implies an effort to integrate concepts and terminology that are far from being resolved. And it means, without a doubt, proposing changes, adjustments and modifications in subjects with a long tradition as well as in those that are more recent. But the difficulty this implies will be compensated by an exciting attraction: it could mean that teachers and experts in many different fields could find satisfaction in the search for understanding and interaction with other subjects, other points of view and above all with their immersion in modernity.

When creating new spaces, the difficulties are of a different nature. Curricular space is previous and always highly debated in all school programmes. There is never enough time to carry out the many required tasks, and if the new subjects fight to gain space, the traditional subjects will try to avoid losing the spaces they already occupy. In this sense, creating media education subjects or materials – as seemed advisable – will not be easy

and will have to be done slowly. Occasionally a period of reform or a legislative change can be used, but it is more likely that this will be met with resistance. The best option, then, might be to try a two-pronged path that simultaneously involves taking advantage of the possible existence of elective subjects or elective curriculum planning by schools and teachers. As time goes by, if these spaces are seized the conditions might be produced that would enable subjects related to media education to be established.

At any rate, whatever the potential strategies are, what is certain is that media education must be implemented in elementary school and must go as far as secondary school as well. Each age needs a specific treatment and specific contents. In the first few years of education, media training should probably discuss consumption habits and styles, and ways of expression. Later, different languages can be studied and analysed, and gradually critical teachings and recommendations for accessing and participating in the media should be introduced. It is also likely that given the nature of the organisation of elementary school curricula and their flexibility, it will be easier to introduce media education in the earlier stages of schooling than in secondary education, where the curricula are fuller and less flexible.

At first it seems to us more feasible to gain practical spaces for media education. These could include supplementary activities, production workshops, school media, access to local media, etc. They will be a way of introducing knowledge and practice of the media in schools. They will have the advantage of being activities that enhance the school's visibility and students' motivation, but it will have the disadvantage of not having full academic recognition for credits or evaluation. In this way, without a doubt, it will provide schools with a good environment for media education, but peripherally and without it becoming a specific subject in and of itself. Nevertheless, this is totally necessary within an overall strategy of media education.

Media Education and Computer Literacy

The information society is imposing a new communicative environment: new media and languages that impose new competencies. Media education will be an educational space that allows for a greater adaptation to these new media and will facilitate and stimulate the skills needed for personal and group development.

In this sense, there is a broad intersection between media education and computer literacy, that is, the set of competencies needed to use computers in the information society. However, we should also bear in mind that teaching computer skills cannot be confused with media education, because the latter is much broader and because computer literacy is generally merely instrumental and does not correspond to the orientation that we believe media education should have. We can recall the emphasis on the aspect of critical awareness that UNESCO's definitions of media education point out:

"Identify the sources of media texts, their political, social, commercial and/or cultural interests, and their contexts: a) Analyse, critically reflect upon and create media; b) Interpret the messages and values offered by the media; c) Gain, or demand access to media for both reception and production; d) Select appropriate media for communicating youngsters' own messages or stories and for reaching their intended audience." (UNESCO, 1999 Vienna Conference)

When examined functionally, computer literacy in fact constitutes an instrumental field of knowledge that allows one to perform new tasks in the information society. But media education is something more than an instrumental, practical education. It involves acquiring awareness; it allows for the construction of meaning, and in this way it guides the operative capabilities that are required in the information society.

Socio-political and market demands are quickly encouraging computer literacy, but becoming computer literate does not complete a media education. The former belongs to the paradigm of technological needs in the sense that that computer technologies require users with certain technical competencies. The latter forms part of the paradigm of knowledge that expands civic and human consciousness.

Reducing media education to mere computer literacy would be technocratic reductionism, while including computer literacy within the media education paradigm would involve including *learning how to do something* within the broadest and most meaningful realm of *learning to be*. In other words, it would involve including technological knowledge in the broadest realm of acquiring consciousness and meaning.

At any rate, media education must now take advantage of the enormous potential for change, stimulus and changes in perspective that the obligatory computer literacy is imposing as the ideal means to acquire an appropriate critical consciousness. Critical thinking can be more easily developed when the established rules are beginning to be

questioned and ways of doing things are subject to brusque changes. And this is precisely what is happening now.

School Media

One path that should be explored and experimented with when encouraging media education is the development of school media. By “school media” we mean the media that arise within the context of the school and are produced by the students: newspapers and magazines, websites, school radio and television stations, etc. These media emerge from school or afterschool activities and involve the students in practical experiences and productions that in some way resemble the jobs of media professionals. However, their audience is the school community, and they generally deal with issues that are relevant to this audience. Many of them serve as true experiments in media learning in that they help the students become familiar with production processes and involve them in the channels of dissemination and consumption. They provide the students with true experiences of mediated communication, thus bringing them closer to the logic of the major media.

Until very recently, the dissemination of school media was restricted, and their range of influence was mainly local spaces and nearby communities. This restricted range has been overcome with Internet and it is now potentially planet-wide. This is paving the way for relationships and contacts among students from all over the world with different languages and cultures who can nevertheless share similar experiences. It is setting the stage for the appearance of virtual communities that enrich educational processes and provide the youth with new perspectives, giving them a sense of plurality and international integration that until now was difficult to inculcate. Obviously, these processes enrich education while simultaneously fostering media education.

On the whole, school media can constitute new ways of projecting the school within its immediate – and distant – environment, and can be transformed into platforms for interaction and contact that require (and, consequently, foster) media education skills. It is possible that the systematic promotion of these media by educational authorities, along with the new possibilities brought about by new technologies – which are becoming lighter and more accessible – may make school media one of the best tools in education media within the near future.

The Family and Media Education

Another dimension in media education occurs at home with the family. Family education not only precedes school education, but it almost always goes along with the influence of school. Habits, ways and styles of media consumption at home are decisive in forging children's attitudes toward the media, and almost any effort at media education in the schools will be in vain if it is not compatible with the home environment. The role of parents here is fundamental.

Recent studies carried out in many European countries (see the model by Sonia Livingston, *Young People and New Media*, London, Sage, 2002) demonstrate that in homes with ever more access to the media, parents tend to ignore their children's media consumption, intervening little in the selection of programmes, and they tend to spend less time with their children in media consumption. With computers, interactive games and above all Internet, teens and young people are shutting themselves in their rooms more and more, separating them from the common areas and leading them to increasingly solitary, intensive consumption. In all these cases, media education at home is totally absent.

Children and teens prefer to decide for themselves how to use the media. They do not like their parents to control them, and they find few opportunities for dialogue and consultation with their parents, especially in relation to new technologies. On the other hand, the time spent consuming music, Internet, television and computer games is consistently on the rise. And if we add to this the trend toward personal and domestic privatisation of media – it is becoming more and more frequent for children to have their own complete media equipment in their bedrooms – it is obvious that we are looking at a new model of household. Little has been written and experienced on how media education and general education should proceed given this context. Parents thus feel disconcerted and do not find possibilities for dialogue with their children. In addition, as daily living conditions become more difficult, with more time spent at work and the time spent at home reduced, parents have few possibilities to enter into the conflicts with their children that are an inevitable part of child rearing, and tend to entrust their children's education and upbringing to the media. Once again, media education tends to disappear and we paradoxically find ourselves facing an undeniable trend: voluntarily or involuntarily,

parents tend to delegate their children's *upbringing* to the *media*; instead of media education we tend to find mediated education.

Within this context, the objective of and effort to recover the meaning of media education seem quite important to us. Conditions must be created so that parents know about and participate in their children's media consumption so that they can monitor poor consumption habits and excesses, and so that they can actively intervene when faced with risky contents in the media, especially television: violent, pornographic, sexist, discriminatory and consumer contents. Finally, parents should be encouraged to manage the richness offered to their children by the media toward contexts that are educational and satisfactory in the broad sense of the word.

In order to create these conditions, we must assume that parents are informed about the importance of their role with respect to the media, that they have some type of pedagogical strategy in this regard, and finally that they have practical opportunities to put these into practice. Generally speaking, this is not the case in many families. It is more frequent that in the home, media habits are developed through improvisation, routines and passive behaviours and that, in this context, the children are left to their own *media luck*.

Broad backing will be needed to change this situation, combining educational campaigns with consciousness-raising actions. Both public authorities and civil society should participate in this backing, and its interaction with the media education that takes place at school will play a key role.

Civil Society

This third social sector called civil society, which is not the state and does not intervene in the market, must play a fundamental role in media education. In fact, it already does.

Throughout Europe there is a growing presence of professional educators' associations, and associations of parents, professionals, political and religious movements, and young people that protest media-related risk situations and encourage media consciousness-raising and education. In general, each of these associations has its own style and tends to focus on different aspects, but together they manage to constitute an increasing systematic and comprehensive network of concerns and attitudes toward the media.

These associations are increasing their power with regard to the media. They are beginning to form a kind of lobby on specific topics (education, violent content, sexism, etc.) and are gradually become more influential. Lately, one can notice the trend toward creating platforms for interaction among these groups and to participate when given the opportunity in any instance of guidance or regulation. It is obvious that their ability to denounce risks or abuses, to initiate debates and controversies, and to present proposals and suggestions for action is contributing in this process to the creation in public opinion of a type of media education curriculum. Despite the fact that they are not yet very well known, their participation, documents and declarations are doubtless going to represent one of the areas of greatest activity in media education in the very near future.

Instances of Regulation

The different councils, authorities, ministries, forums and other platforms that are charged in different countries with the regulation, monitoring or supervision of the communication media also play a fundamental role in media education. Recently, we have seen reports, studies and documents generated with regard to the media in many countries that have aroused lively controversies and have supported certain legislative or regulatory actions: the obligation to point out those television programmes that are not recommended for young people; establishing certain time periods in which risky contents may not be shown on television; encouraging children's programmes and cultural and educational programming; creating specific codes for dealing with certain topics; obligatorily protecting minors from certain media content, etc. A large part of them not only promote media education, they are also themselves ideal instruments for social education through media regardless of the controversy they might arouse and the arguments about whether their norms are applicable or not because, as a whole, they contribute to sensitise opinions on key issues in any media education programme or action.

On the other hand, the majority of these instances of regulation constitute or foster the existence of means of social participation in the media. They tend to create general agreements among the different media actors and encourage the acceptance of self-regulatory codes. Many of these actions are still in their infant stages and are not very well entrenched or at times are merely testimonial. But as a whole, they make a solid initiative which is qualitatively important and which encourages participation in, access to and

stimulation of dialogue and agreement with regard to the media. That is, they are a useful impetus for the development of media education.

Implementation Strategy

How can the changes in educational programmes needed for media education be developed in Europe?

So that it is not merely a name change, the following elements are needed: a) Legislative changes that introduce curricular changes, and corresponding changes in the school space-time-context; b) a social climate favourable to change; c) the well known existence of a body of knowledge and corresponding teaching materials to conduct media education; d) a teaching staff with the desire and ability to using these new teaching methods.

Legislative changes are slow and costly, and they depend on the regulations and protocols established in each country. In the majority of cases, they usually result from a process of change. I believe that in order to achieve these there must be a previous series of processes related to the other dimensions mentioned. I shall briefly outline these:

1. It is necessary to foster the existence of groups, associations and working groups, of teachers, students, supervisors and professionals interested in dialogue with the media. These groups will prove to be the most dynamic actors in the introduction of curricular change and educational change in general. At this time, these groups already exist to a greater or lesser degree in all European countries. But in order to stimulate their development, platforms for interaction and contact among them must be promoted in order to exchange experiences and points of view and share strategies for acting.
2. It is necessary to push for curricular changes within the educational system. To do this, a detailed study of the possibilities and limitations of the different curricula in different countries and an examination of the different means of achieving equivalent results are needed.
3. We must encourage public awareness of media education that goes beyond the school, that implicates other cultural and educational bodies in society as well as the communication media themselves. Any instrument that can help create this consciousness would be helpful: manifestos, public commitments, institutional agreements, campaigns, etc.
4. Media education must be incorporated into the family. This means pushing forward formal and informal educational initiatives and promoting activities in schools, both to

foster activities and to implicate families and young people outside the school environment.

5. Educating young people about how to spend their free time must be a specific dimension of education, and opportunities must be created in which experiences of participation in and access to the media enrich our youth's free time.
6. The local media must pay special attention to their relationship with the educational system and school media. They should support and stimulate any media-based educational action that contributes to stimulating media education.
7. The regulatory authorities should attempt to foster the existence of a dimension of media education that relates to its different initiatives. This will contribute to affirming their policies and create adequate public awareness.
8. The communication media, both public and private, must simulate the creation of spaces devoted to media education and to audience access and participation. Naturally, more responsibility for this falls on the public media, specifically to those with educational or cultural functions.
9. Public authorities should establish the means for pushing forward, promoting and financing media and media products that contribute to create a media environment appropriate for citizens' educational and cultural needs. This environment will be the greatest contribution toward a positive media education.
10. Parliaments and authorities should ensure the appropriate means to protect children and young people in the area of the media.

11. Das Werk einschließlich aller seiner Teile ist urheberrechtlich geschützt. Jede Verwertung außerhalb der engen Grenzen des Urheberrechtsgesetzes ist ohne Zustimmung des Rechteinhabers unzulässig und strafbar. Das gilt insbesondere für Vervielfältigungen, Übersetzungen, Mikroverfilmungen und die Speicherung und Verarbeitung in elektronischen Systemen.