

# The dimensions and indicators of media literacy in the first stages of schooling

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The present article intends to highlight the specific dimensions and indicators of media literacy that can be reached in the first educational stages. It is important to have an impact on the study of the abilities that this specific age group is able to develop, which will allow them to become the main nucleus of the citizenry in the future.

**Keywords:** Media literacy, children's education, media competition, teaching staff

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## Introduction

Media literacy is founded on dimensions that share indicators that are focused on knowledge, skills and attitudes of the so-called media competency: languages, technology, processes of reception and interaction, production and dissemination processes, ideology, and lastly, aesthetics (Aparici, Campuzano, Ferrés, Matilla, 2010; Ferrés and Piscitelli, 2012). This competency was born within education that is based on “participatory culture, combining the critical and aesthetic spirit and expressive capacity, the development of personal autonomy with social and cultural compromise (Ferrés and Piscitelli, 2012, p.75).” This competency, then, is posed with the premise that the indicators be general and not planned for a specific age or age group. However, the theorists on the subject point out that “media literacy should be the birthright of all citizens, not just children and the young people” (Ferrés and Piscitelli, 2012, p.77). Therefore, they should be adapted for each age group, educational level and even culture. In the educational sphere, a progressive media literacy should be tended to, that aggregates capacities, skills or abilities as the child grows, just as what is done with other subjects (language, math, foreign language, etc.), implemented and included in education curricula.

The diverse studies that focus on the relationships between the child, media and education have brought important data on media competency indices that the children have during

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the early learning stages. Then, research conducted on the period 2010/13<sup>1</sup> revealed that in the linguistic dimension, 77% of the participants in the study “are able to interpret and value diverse codes of representation and the function they have in a message”. The technological dimension sets forth mixed results, as 93.8% of the participants use more than 5 technological devices out of the thirteen shown in the study; lower results appear if we look into the use of educational software at schools: “only 14.2% acknowledge having used these programs, and 63.9% have only used one or two”. Also, if we take a look at the results related to the nature of the games used at school, the data are, if at all possible, more worrisome: 51.5% of the students “say that they do not play any at all, as opposed to 78.8% of the cases that attest to playing at home”, which demonstrate that the educational sphere is not catering to the everyday reality the child participates in in the multi-screen society. The production and programming dimension confirms that 47% of the children “are able to correctly associate the image and the target audience”, while if we look at the dimension that explains the processes of reception and audience, 74.1% of the subjects “acknowledge that there are television programs that their parents do not allow them to watch”. Ideology and values is another of the dimensions that are poorly developed, and for this, the experts conclude that there is “a scarce level of competence, as far as that when faced with the transmission of gender stereotypes in the media and advertising, the children can usually differentiate the toys according to gender, and they scarcely opt for recognizing that both genders can play with the toys”. Lastly, as for aesthetics, “a poor level of competence is perceived (...) as well as a scarce acknowledgement of the value of audiovisual language” (Pérez-Rodríguez, Ramírez and García-Ruiz, 2015, pp.623-624). In this sense, the experts conclude their assessment revealing that there is need for training/teaching about the use of audiovisual codes and languages from the start of schooling. Schools should not exclude Media Literacy, as the competencies derived from the dimensions mentioned are considered fundamental for the children to solidly cope in every social environments.

The difficulties detected when implementing Media Literacy at school have been researched on by various authors (Aparici, Campuzano, Ferrés and Matilla, 2010), noting that its inclusion should be worked on from diverse areas: curricular integration, training of the teaching staff, production and diffusion of class materials, and sensitizing of society. Actions that are focused on these four terrains would ease the teaching of media education at school. If from the star of the planning of the dimensions, the different indicators would have been put into context or selected according to the educational levels, maybe the implementation of media competency would have been simpler, as it would have made easier the correct choosing of the feasible indicators to be worked on in each school stage.

Throughout the present article, we will be referring to the school stage than in Spain is focused on the 2nd stage of Infant Education (from 3 to 6 years old), but it does not exactly coincide with the classifications and denominations that are specific to other countries. In the Czech Republic, the system is divided into an initial stage named Pre-school (from 2 to 5 years old) that is not compulsory, and a later stage that is deemed compulsory for those responsible for the children, named Primary, for ages 6 to 15. In Finland, there are two different periods: one for ages 1 to 6, and another for Preschool education, which is reserved to a very specific period, from 6 to 7 years of age, meaning that it's just before what in Spain is Basic Education, named Primary in Finland. In the United Kingdom, there is a stage named *Pre-school*, which is also named *Nursery*, reserved for children aged two and a half to 4 years of age; these academic years are not compulsory, as there is no school curriculum at this level. The next stage is *Primary Education*, for children aged 5 to 11, and is divided into *Key Stages* (KS) or stages where the academic years named *Years* are found. As shown by these data, there is no common consensus between countries, as the educational projects are planned differently, as

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<sup>1</sup> “La enseñanza obligatoria ante la competencia en comunicación audiovisual en un entorno digital”.  
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referring to their form. It is true that the age of 6 appears to be a key stage in the maturation of the child, which we can use when thinking about the overall development that the children experience.

## The dimensions of media competency in the first school stages

Therefore, the dimensions that underpin media competency are intended to be adaptable to each educational circumstance or age, and for this, we believe necessary their selection so that they can be worked with in each of the stages that make up the first school stages. Some of the indicators that comprise the dimensions will be discarded from the classification, and others will be nuanced with the aim of adapting them to ages from 3 to 6 that we are dealing with.

The dimension of **LANGUAGE (L)** - that is centered on the rules and use given to the audiovisual language codes for communication or analysis of messages- is the only one that maintains intact all the indicators, out of the rest of them. Then, within the **Area of Analysis**, four indicators that comprise it are regarded:

- **LA<sup>1</sup>.** *Ability to interpret and evaluate the various codes of representation and the function they perform within a message.* Maybe not all the elements that comprise audiovisual language will be understood in these ages, but specific ones such as music or types of shots, that allow the child to understand their meaning and choice throughout the audiovisual plot, could be.
- **LA<sup>2</sup>.** *Capacity to analyze and evaluate the messages from the perspective of sense and meaning, from narrative structures and the conventions of genre and formatting.* We depart from the cognitive development limitations found in children aged 3 to 6, which lead to the children not understanding well the audiovisual narrative structures that are distant from the classical linear structure (set-up, confrontation and resolution). We should be aware that at these ages, the children are acquiring the sense of time, and this is precisely why the choosing of a good audiovisual product by the teacher can serve to start to work with this aspect, so that the jumps in time in a specific production could be used for distinguishing between the before and after of an event.
- **LA<sup>3</sup>.** *Ability to understand the flow of stories and information from multimedia, networks, platforms and modes of expression.* At these stages, the child begins to understand the story sequence (chapters), and where to place them, especially if we take into account those transmedia productions that could satisfy the needs of the child.
- **LA<sup>4</sup>.** *Ability to establish links between texts -intertextuality-, codes and media, producing knowledge that is open, systematized and interrelated.* The audiovisual products destined to this audience emerge under the premises of transmedia narrative. At present, it is easy for a child to perfectly imagine the universe created by his or her favorite series by only hearing its songs (sounds). The same occurs with tales or videogames that help to establish this relationship.

Within the **Area of Expression**, we will take into the account the following indicators:

- **LE<sup>1</sup>.** *Ability to express oneself via a wide range of systems of representation and meaning:* Communication is not only based on spoken language, but other systems, such as the image, exist. In this stage, the child is beginning to dominate the diversity of languages, and he or she should be able to communicate with them, as well as with the audiovisual language.
- **LE<sup>2</sup>.** *Ability to choose between different systems of representation and different styles according to the communication situation, the type of content to be transmitted and the type of user:* At these ages, the children are able to change the type of language perceived according to the situation they find themselves in and with whom they are speaking. The symbolism game can help in working with this indicator, as it places the child in a communication environment that transforms him or her, and turns them into a unique character full of

specific nuances. If, after actively listening to a narration of a real football match we ask the children to become narrators, they will be able to re-create voice inflexions and intonations that are not natural in their day-to-day narration. They are then able to “re-interpret” themselves, depending on the content and moment chosen.

- **LE<sup>3</sup>.** *Ability to modify existing products, conferring new meaning and value to them:* The child can conduct linguistic modifications, being able to lightly modify simple audiovisual narrative texts. The child has the ability to recount, in a brief manner and with a variety of their own nuances, the events that occurred in a chapter he or she has seen, or a story that he or she has heard. This story will not be the same, as he or she has made it his or her own.

The dimension of **TECHNOLOGY (T)** is based on the functioning and the use of diverse technological tools that rule in the area of audiovisual and digital communication. Indisputably, the technological capacities of children at this age appear reduced, so that we can only abide to 2 out of the 4 indicators of the **Area of Analysis**, and none of the ones reserved for the **Area of Expression**.

- **TA<sup>1</sup>.** *Understanding the role played by the information and communication technologies in society, and their possible effects.* At school, the teacher can start to instill this indicator on the little ones, by simply planning a daily or weekly review on their use, moments or places that are currently used by the children. Also, the teacher could start to give general guidelines and advise on their responsible use.
- **TA<sup>2</sup>.** *Interact in a significant way with media that enables the user to broaden his or her thinking skills:* The interaction with multiple screens that can be used to conduct processes of teaching/learning (television, computer, smartphone, tablet, console...) is constant at these ages. This interaction, together with the choosing of products by the educators or parents, that are adequate for the cognitive abilities of the children, is key for fomenting the resolution of problems through the different formats.

The dimension of **RECEPTION AND INTERACTION (R)** refers to the identification of audiences or evaluation of the emotions transmitted by the messages from the media in the processes of reception. Taking into account the age group that is the object of study of this research, we can only select 4 indicators from the 8 that comprise this dimension, with all of them found within the **Area of Analysis**, and none of them within the **Area of Expression**.

- **RA<sup>2</sup>.** *Ability to discern why certain media, products or content are popular and why they are successful individually or collectively: the wants and needs that satisfy the senses, emotions, and stimulate the cognitive, aesthetic and cultural interest, etc., of audiences:* All of these aspects, related to likes and needs, can also be worked with in these ages, as the children have defined tastes and are even able to explain why. This ability to discuss could be worked upon after the viewing of a children’s animated program or a short film, either verbally (question/answer assembly) or even through more manual activities.
- **RA<sup>3</sup>.** *To evaluate the cognitive effects of emotions: to become aware of the ideas and values associated to characters, actions and situations that generate positive and negative emotions according to the case in question:* The audiovisual media are windows to real or imagined stories, where the exhibition of feelings and emotions are an indispensable resource to show the emotional state of the characters when facing events that occur through the audiovisual narrative plot. This results in that the receptor feels more or less empathy towards a specific character, his or her actions and manner of resolving conflicts. In the first stages of education, we can play at recognizing emotions, taking advantage of the expressivity of the faces shown by the characters in children’s animated shows. In this way, we could invite the child to think about a specific emotional reaction of a character, and its association to a similar situation to the day-to-day life of the child.
- **RA<sup>5</sup>.** *Express an awareness of the importance of context in the interactive processes of reception and interaction.* Presently, there is the possibility of contexts that result in the reception of a specific message being of different nature, thanks to the existing multiplicity of

screens. Then, multimodal communication, or transmedia, already studies this diversity and the adaptation of the product to them. This has led to the existence of media that foster individual reception (computer, tablet or smartphone) and others that are designed to be consumed in collective reception (computer or television). This allows for the sharing of the physical space used for the reception (home, classroom, movie theater) with the context where the stories on the screen are developed, share emotions and feelings with the friend next to us, or even share the viewing experience with people that we do not know (movie theater), but who become a group or unit through the magic of the cinema when viewing the audiovisual narrative together. These aspects can be worked on with the littlest ones. Let's think for a moment about the basic behavior norms when we go to the movie theatre, that allow coexistence with the rest in the same space and without conflicts, which propitiates good reception.

- **RA<sup>7</sup>**. *Appreciate messages from other cultures, for intercultural dialogue in an age of media without borders.* Tolerance and respect of other beliefs, solidarity or curiosity for cultural diversity are values that should be instilled from the earliest age. The teacher should find documents that show the characteristics of other cultures for their knowledge and respect.

The dimension of **PRODUCTION AND DIFFUSION (P)** escape the understanding for of the age group we want to work with, from 3 to 6 years old, as their indicators are very specific -those responsible and phases of production, utilizing of technological resources, participatory culture, etc.-. Nevertheless, we could adapt and take into account 3: one of them from the **Area of Analysis** and two from the **Area of Expression**.

- **PA<sup>1</sup>**. *To know the basic differences between individual and collective productions, and between popular and corporate productions; in the case of the latter two, between productions by citizens and private entities.* Perhaps the child will not be able to distinguish between every type of production due to their age, but we could start to exercise the difference between an individual production and a collective one. These aspects could be worked on in the first educational stages through two very simple examples: the students aged between 3 and 6 are able to take a photograph by themselves, and a photograph (non-professional) could be considered individual, as it does not need more people to be produced. However, if we think about other types of audiovisual products (animated programs, radio or television programs, films, sport broadcasts...) we could say that a work team is needed (journalists, scriptwriters, lighting specialists, photographers, actors, directors, broadcasters, producers...), that require collaboration, assignment of tasks; which is named collective production. This basic differentiation could start to be worked on starting from the first years of schooling.
- **PE<sup>2</sup>**. *Ability to collectively work in the production of multimedia or multimodal products.* In this school stage, team work and collaboration is very important for fomenting fundamental aspects for coexistence at work in society. It is known that media are characterized by team work; a radio or television program, or a film are created because in the background, there is a team of professional who work in unison, in order to create a specific audiovisual product. In the area of education, as what occurs in the creation of media products, the collaboration between all the agents involved is needed in order to move forward projects that improve the processes of teaching/learning. These children should learn to share, and they should start to become aware that there are processes in which the collaboration with others is needed to make them work (create a radio narration in which each child has a different role and in which his or her participation is necessary). The teacher would be the one in charge of disseminating the programs through a *podcast* or a school radio.
- **PE<sup>3</sup>**. *Ability to select meaningful messages, and use and transform them to make new meanings.* If we think about animated shows or films, the child tends to keep the essential parts, the parts that they like most or whatever captured his attention. Perhaps he will not be able to remember the entire audiovisual narrative plot (especially if the structure is not linear), but he is able to recreate new stories and new endings with the characters. At

this age, the child acts by imitating, and due to this, he is able to easily reproduce what is shown in the screens when he plays, allowing (the screens) to become part of his reality with this transformation.

The dimension of **IDEOLOGY AND VALUES (I)** is related to the ability of comprehensive and critical reading of the audiovisual messages as well as the values that represent this reality. Then, from the 12 indicators that comprise this dimension, we will select 5 (all of them from the **Area of Analysis**).

- **IA<sup>1</sup>**. *Ability to discover how media representations structure our perception of reality, often through unnoticed communications.* Let's think about how advertising subliminally makes it so that the little ones want to eat a specific product, dress with a specific brand...just as the character from their favorite shows. The fact that children tend to imitate at this age has already been mentioned: they feel identified with the character, with the way they act, and they think of themselves as superheroes, princesses, popstars, etc., being unable to distinguish between reality and fiction. Therefore, training on the perception of what is real or fictional is indispensable at these ages, and it is important to help the child understand this distinction.
- **IA<sup>4</sup>**. *Detect the intentions and interests that underlie corporate and popular productions, their ideology and values, latent or explicit, and take a critical stance towards them.* One of the messages that quintessentially moves by intention or interest is advertising. The special offers or advertising spots, which have lately become more specialized, are full of intentions of trying to convince adults and children alike, with the aim of selling, creating needs. The younger ones are keener on feeling this attraction, as they are not immune to the techniques of persuasion utilized by this genre. For this, in this stage, at least, the children should be able to differentiate between what is and isn't advertising.
- **IA<sup>6</sup>**. *Ability to analyze individual and collective virtual identities, and detect stereotypes, especially in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, social class, religion, culture, disabilities, etc., analyzing their causes and consequences:* At this age, the differentiation of the fundamental features that distinguish the individual in society due to gender, race, ethnicity or social class, can be worked on in the classroom and through audiovisual productions. If this capacity in the classroom is fomented, it will make the child appreciated each other for who they are, without discriminations, respecting the cultural differences through working through stereotypes.
- **IA<sup>8</sup>**. *Ability to recognize that empathy with people and stories in media can be used both as a mechanism for manipulation and as an opportunity for self-awareness and new experiences.* The effects, identification and the management of emotions through audiovisual production and different screens are taken into account.
- **IA<sup>9</sup>**. *Ability to manage our own emotional responses when interacting with screens, according to the ideology and values that these screens evoke.* Audiovisual messages elicit feelings, emotions shape us, and are even able to make us feel the emotions felt by a specific character. The screens make the children laugh, cry or be happy, the emotions that the child has to identify first in order to master or manage them later on.

The dimension of **AESTHETICS (AE)**, is precisely focused on the aesthetic result of the audiovisual messages, as this capacity intends that the receptor be able to bring about an aesthetic judgement when evaluating a product, prioritizing the manner in which the messages are presented. This dimension, also, brings together analysis, evaluation and the enjoyment of the formal and thematic innovations. Then, from the 6 indicators that comprise this dimension, 5 are chosen: three of them from the **Area of Analysis**, and two from the **Area of Expression**.

- **EA<sup>1</sup>**. *Ability to enjoy formal aspects of media, that is, not only of what is communicated by also how it is communicated:* Aesthetic taste within the standards of beauty is teachable. There are principles that regulate aesthetics depending on the disciplines, and we could even nuance that with time, they have evolved (architecture, painting, illustration, sculpture...). In the audiovisual sphere, something similar has occurred, especially if

we refer to educational stages: we should think about colors that are associated to emotional states, feelings...education through aesthetic of form, typography or image quality.

- **EA<sup>2</sup>**. *Sensitivity to recognize a media production that does not satisfy minimum aesthetic requirements*: If we educate the gaze of the child taking into account the previous indicator, he will start to acquire sensitivity for recognizing everything that comes from the standards stipulated. The aesthetics of the modern animated shows differ much from the 80's and the 90's, and this is why many of them have been re-mastered with more quality, to achieve more attractive aesthetic results that are more similar to modern products.
- **EA<sup>3</sup>**. *Ability to relate media productions to other artistic output and to detect mutual influences*: This indicator can easily be worked on in this stage, as there is a multitude of audiovisual products that are based on specific historical periods or relevant character. Through its viewing, the child will be able to find a relationship with other artistic manifestations.
- **EE<sup>1</sup>**. *Ability to produce elementary messages that can be understood and which help to raise the level of personal or collective creativity, originality and sensibility*. The radio medium could help us illustrate this indicator, as the production of radio messages by the child is viable at these ages. To tell stories, narrate the events of the weekend, or how he feels, etc., could be a great way to work on this capacity, at the same time that we work with verbal language, speed, the order of ideas, choosing of adequate words to express an idea, diction, the nuances of intonation when asking a question or an exclamation, etc.
- **EE<sup>2</sup>**. *Ability to appropriate and transform artistic productions, boosting creativity, innovation, experimentation and aesthetic sensibility*. Painting can serve us as an example to understand this indicator, as the child is able to reproduce a work and let his imagination fly to transform it. In this way, we can play with the reproduction of the shots from their favorite series or films, giving them the freedom to modify and introduce elements without losing sight of the aesthetic principles of the image.

The Figure 1 shows the indicators that correspond to the 6 dimensions of media competency in the first learning stages. As shown, the solid color ones are the indicators that can be worked on with students aged 3 to 6, while the dotted ones refer to the indicators that are attainable at every learning stage or will be acquired by the individual at some point in their lives, alluding to the defined “permanent learning”, which is characteristic of the society of information. Therefore, and taking into account the figure, is it necessary to clarify the dimensions of media competency that cannot be understood individually, but are planned to be worked on in a global and progressive manner, according to the characteristics of each student. Therefore, we do not lose sight of the original dimensions and indicators proposed by Ferrés and Piscitelli (2012) “In the phenomenon of media education, language, for example, cannot be understood without technology. Likewise, neither can ideology nor aesthetics be understood without language” (p. 76). Within the education area and the first school stage, the articulation of innovative teaching proposals where communication media are no longer thought of as simple resources is therefore necessary.

Therefore, some of the indicators discussed by Ferrés would necessarily have to be left out when thinking about younger children (3-6 years old). The *ability to handle technological innovations that make multimodal and multimedia communication possible*. (TA<sup>4</sup>) is excluded, as well as the indicators from the technology dimension that refer to the ability to correctly manage, adapt to communication objects or the conscious manipulation of images and sounds (TE<sup>1</sup>, TE<sup>2</sup>, TE<sup>3</sup>).

If we take into account reception and interaction, we cannot utilize, among other indicators, the RA<sup>1</sup>, that highlights *the ability to choose, review and self-assess the media diet, on the basis of conscious and reasonable criteria*, or the RA<sup>6</sup>, that is related to *the ability to understand basic concepts of audience, of audience studies, their usefulness and limitations*.

FIGURE 1. DIMENSIONS AND INDICATORS OF MEDIA COMPETENCY  
IN THE 2ND CYCLE OF INFANT EDUCATION

		RE <sup>4</sup>		IE <sup>3</sup>	
		RE <sup>3</sup>	PE <sup>7</sup>	IE <sup>2</sup>	
		RE <sup>2</sup>	PE <sup>6</sup>	IE <sup>1</sup>	
		RE <sup>1</sup>	PE <sup>5</sup>	IA <sup>7</sup>	
		RA <sup>8</sup>	PE <sup>4</sup>	IA <sup>5</sup>	
LE <sup>3</sup>	TE <sup>3</sup>	RA <sup>6</sup>	PE <sup>1</sup>	IA <sup>3</sup>	
LE <sup>2</sup>	TE <sup>2</sup>	RA <sup>4</sup>	PA <sup>4</sup>	IA <sup>2</sup>	EA <sup>4</sup>
LE <sup>1</sup>	TE <sup>1</sup>	RA <sup>1</sup>	PA <sup>3</sup>	IA <sup>9</sup>	EE <sup>2</sup>
LA <sup>4</sup>	TA <sup>4</sup>	RA <sup>7</sup>	PA <sup>2</sup>	IA <sup>8</sup>	EE <sup>1</sup>
LA <sup>3</sup>	TA <sup>3</sup>	RA <sup>5</sup>	PE <sup>3</sup>	IA <sup>6</sup>	EA <sup>3</sup>
LA <sup>2</sup>	TA <sup>2</sup>	RA <sup>3</sup>	PE <sup>2</sup>	IA <sup>4</sup>	EA <sup>2</sup>
LA <sup>1</sup>	TA <sup>1</sup>	RA <sup>2</sup>	PA <sup>1</sup>	IA <sup>1</sup>	EA <sup>1</sup>
Lenguajes	Tecnologías	Recepción e interacción	Producción y difusión	Ideología y valores	Estética

Source: Author generated.

Also, most of the indicators that are related to Production and Dissemination are left out as well, as it is very difficult for the child to *know the phases of the processes of production and the infrastructure necessary for individual, group or corporate productions (PE<sup>1</sup>)* or *how to manage one's own online/offline identity, and to maintain a responsible attitude towards the control of the individual's private data and those of others (PE<sup>5</sup>)*

Similar conclusions have been reached for criteria of Ideology and Values, as these indicators cannot be taken into account considering the early stages of education. The children are not able to (due to their young age) to *recognize the influence of media messages in the making of decisions related to consumption, the personal and family relationships, etc. (IA<sup>2</sup>)*, and are not able to *utilize the new communication media tools to commit themselves in a responsible manner as citizens, in culture and society, at the same time favoring intercultural dialogue. (IE<sup>3</sup>)*

Perhaps it is the Aesthetics dimension (along with Language) the one that can be studied and used in its entirety, as only one aspect from the area of analysis is left out from the

study: the *ability to identify basic aesthetic categories such as formal and thematic innovation, originality, style, schools and trends (EA<sup>4</sup>)*.

## Media literacy of the staff

The teaching staff are the main figures in the processes of teaching/learning, who, in classical terms, are understood to be the sources of knowledge. However, due to technological development, market growth and the implementation of the Society of Knowledge, competitiveness and qualifications deeply affect this indispensable figure for the transmission of culture. Therefore, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a new social and educational panorama is presented to the staff, in which the communication media have to intervene as the sources of access to information, and hence, to knowledge. Therefore, the teacher becomes a guide within the educational processes so that the student is able to develop self-learning (Ávila and Tello, 2004). Along the same lines, we should remember that “the introduction of technologies and new ways of communication in society, are not only pernicious because they favor the work by teaching agents, but they also free them from the traditional, repetitive labor, and on the other hand, they allow for an increase of creativity by the receptor” (Caldeiro and Aguaded, 2015, p.39). Therefore, the development of media competency in teaching staff is one of the key elements in education.

In the last few years, there has been insistent talk about the digital divide that is being created in the population, linked to technological, digital and media development between generations. The rise of communication media implies the mastery of specific abilities for the use, consumption, management, criticism, production, etc., of the information the user receives through diverse channels, which are utilized for access to culture and knowledge. But the generational differences between the teacher and the student cannot become a hindrance for educating on the new competencies demanded by society. The school as a whole cannot stay on the fringe of this evolution, as competent citizens would not be trained or educated. Therefore, the constant training of teachers should be a reality in the schools of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, especially if we take into account media competency. As shown by the study “Showing films and other audiovisual content in European Schools. Obstacles and best practices” (2015), the lack of media competencies of the teaching staff in Europe is evident (Ramboll, 2006; Banlankast and Blamire, 2007; Hew and Brush, 2007; Mueller, Wood, Willoughby, Ross and Specht, 2008). In Spain, the levels of media competency shown by this collective have also been evaluated, and the data evidences the emerging need of continuing with training in communication and technology matters, high quality media training:

31.5% of the teaching staff possesses an advanced level of media competency, a result that is slightly overtaken by the group that has a medium level (34%) as well as the group that has a low level of media competency, the basic level, comprised by 33.5% of the total (...). 75% of the teaching staff has mentioned that they have not received any training related to media education in the last five years, and the responses obtained indicate the existence of deficiencies in the knowledge of fundamental aspects for the adequate use of media. (García-Ruiz, Gozávez and Aguaded, 2014).

Therefore, there is a clear need for the implementation of diverse education policies, at the political as well as curricular levels, that result in the watering down of this ailment. Some theorists agree on the deficiencies found in the training of the teaching staff on media education that not only consists of aspects related to the economic crisis, that without a doubt has interfered with advocacy strategies (Pérez-Tornero and Pi, 2014; Stocchetti, 2015) and that have resulted in the reduction of training courses, but to aspects that are related to the didactic implementation of media in the classroom. Despite the difficulties presented, it is clear that the teaching staff needs new competencies if they are

to succeed in a multi-screen society (Díaz, 2009; Gozávez, González and Caldeiro, 2014; Fernández-Cruz and Fernández-Díaz, 2016). Not only are conceptual, procedural and attitudinal competencies needed for teaching, but more specific competencies are also needed in order to cope with media mediation in the classroom. Communication media have an influence is the creation of an education model that requires new purposes and demands for not becoming outdated education, mired in traditional pedagogic techniques. To face this challenge, the UNESCO (2011), published the “Media and Information Literacy Curriculum for Teachers” that complements the previous “ICT Competency Framework for Teachers” (2008). Since the publication of this curriculum, teachers from diverse countries have made adaptations, and proposals that experiment with its implementation have been made.

## Conclusion

As the dimensions that comprise media competency have been conceived for being adapted to a specific educational situation, period or age, a detailed study of dimensions proposed by Ferrés and Piscitelli (2012) is needed, for choosing those that are ideally suited for working within the levels that comprise the first school stages.

Continuing with the specific description of the dimensions, there are some that are easily adapted to the early ages, such as Language or Aesthetics, while others need to be thought of more carefully in order to implement them to children aged between 3 and 6 years old.

It is difficult to achieve that a child in this age group be able to reach abilities or capacities that the Technology or Production and Dissemination dimensions demand. In these cases, the teacher has to be the main figure in the processes of teaching and learning, demonstrating his or her adult capacities of adapted creation of products.

To conclude, we should make an urgent call for the implementation of teacher’s training plans in this field, as it is indispensable that the teachers be competent in media and be able to master the dimensions presented, becoming then true mediators of media literacy for their students.

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