MEDIA EDUCATION IN MALTA:
HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES AND CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the development of the media education program as it was conceptualized in 1980 and how it developed to the present day. It examines the reasons for the introduction of the program and the strategy adopted. The 'why' and 'how' of media education are discussed in the light of the debate that developed in other countries. This includes comments about different models of media education, the level of inoculation some programs have and the decision whether the subject should be taught on its own or integrated with other subjects. The development of the program, especially the new edition of the books used in this program and the strategy of the program are addressed. The paper focuses on the main themes of the program: (i) the formal or media language aspects; (ii) the content aspect, (iii) children's use of the media, (iv) the societal and organizational aspect – in general and with particular reference to Malta and (v) the production aspect. These aspects are discussed with reference literature on the subject and its treatment in the media education books. A final section will outline possible developments for the program.

I. INTRODUCTION

Media education was formally introduced in schools in Malta in October 1981 at a time when on the international scenario, the inoculation approach was still present in several media education programs, in many countries (Masterman, 1988; Alvarado and Boyd-Barrett, 1992). This approach, whose beginning is commonly attributed to Leavis' and Thompson's 1933 book *Culture and Environment: The training of Critical Awareness*, encourages the protection of children and young people from media influence in the same way one would protect people from a disease (Masterman, 1985).

In the past decades there were several models of media education and different countries adopted different frameworks depending on the context in which they were introduced. Bryant and Anderson (1983) divided the models into two types: "those whose major emphasis is on the classification and analysis of content, and those that emphasize the character of the cognitive processes used by the viewer" (p316). Other authors give different classifications. Minkkinen (1978) outlines three distinct approaches: the moral approach, the aesthetic approach and the communicative approach. In the moral approach, students were provided with moral criteria to evaluate film and television programs. Programs in some countries, for example USA, Sweden and Germany, used social criteria besides moral ones to encourage critical attitudes. On the other hand, the aesthetic model, which generally promoted a hands-on approach, was used in countries such as the USSR, UK and the Netherlands. The aim of this approach was to develop the child's imagination, emotions and creativity. The communicative model, which in many aspects is very similar to the aesthetic approach, aims to teach students to understand audiovisual messages while simultaneously training them to express themselves audio-visually. France, Spain and Belgium adopted this approach (UNESCO, 1977; Minkkinen, 1978). Minkkinen also notes that very often these different models are combined together in some media education programs.

Of particular interest and influence regarding the approach to media education in Malta was the position taken by the Catholic Church. Authoritative Church documents emphasized the moral dimension. The Pastoral Instruction *Communio et Progressio* (1971) states that media education must be given a regular place in schools curricula and be given systematically at every stage of education. It further states that: "It is never too early to start encouraging in children artistic tastes, a keen critical faculty and a sense of personal responsibility based on sound morality" (para. 67). The Decree of Vatican II, *Inter Mirifica* (1963), promoted the teaching of

"proper habits of reading, listening and viewing" (para. 25). These habits were considered "proper" if they were "oriented according to Christian moral principles" (para. 25).

Buckingham (2003) documents the role of Churches in media education outside the formal education system. Church schools, in many countries including Italy, Australia, India, USA, France, Ireland and Chile were putting into practice the documents issued by the Church (UNESCO, 1977; Canavan, 1979; Pungente, 1985). UNDA, the international Catholic Association for radio and TV, was working hand in hand with UNESCO with the aim of promoting both formal and informal teaching of media education (UNDA, 1980). In 1977, UNDA developed the term "educommunication" and in 1980, together with UNESCO, they launched a pilot project which consisted of designing and evaluating a ten lesson course in many countries.

II. INTRODUCING MEDIA EDUCATION IN MALTA

Malta was one of the countries which took part in this project. The international scenario in the beginning of the 1980s provided the context, and some influence, for the introduction of media education in Malta in 1981. There were two other factors which influenced the introduction and development of media education. These were the presence of key persons among Church's decision makers who believed in the importance of the media education as well as the political climate prevailing at that time.

In 1981, broadcasting in Malta was nationalized and was heavily used by Government to propagate its positions in its controversies with the Catholic Church and the Opposition during a period of intense political crisis. The print media were also heavily involved on opposite sides of the political debate. Political polarization was the hallmark of Maltese society and consequently of the media. This situation gave impetus to the idea of promoting media education as a way of

resisting the use of the media for political manipulation and for the spread of non-traditional values.

Although Church documents made media education mandatory in Church schools as early as 1963 (Inter Mirifica, 1963), however up to 1980, media education was not taught in any Church school in Malta. As a result of the enthusiasm of members of the church commission responsible for the media and their collaboration with UNDA, the situation changed and in October 1981 media education was introduced on an experimental basis in four Church schools. In just over five years the number of schools teaching media education increased to twenty seven (Borg and Lauri, 1994).

III. BEYOND THE INOCULATION APPROACH

The content of the program for media education used in the Maltese Church schools is another example how societal and personality factors influence each other resulting in a positive synthesis. On one hand, the societal context favored the inoculation approach to media education, while on the other hand, the team organizing the media education program was influenced by the aesthetic approach. As a result, the books that were developed did not take a judgmental and moralistic attitude but took an experiential approach exploring different media languages and their use. The Maltese model was, and still is, more akin to the aesthetic and communicative model than to the moral model. This is reflected in the media workbooks used in the primary level as well as the textbooks used in the secondary level.

IV. INVOLVING THE STAKE-HOLDERS

In 1982, UNESCO sponsored the "Grunwald Declaration on Media Education" and advocated an integrated strategy for the introduction of media education. This declaration states that the effectiveness of media education "will be most effective when parents, teachers, media

personnel and decision-makers all acknowledge that they have a role to play ….” (UNESCO, 1982, para. 7).

Masterman and Mariet (1994) made a very strong case in favor of the role of parents and media professionals in media education. While they look at parental support as vital to the successful development of media education, they consider collaboration with media professional as something which can have a major impact on the success of such programs.

In Malta, a holistic strategy involving school administrators, teachers, parents and students was used before the subject was introduced in Church schools (Borg, 1987). Stakeholders had to be persuaded that media education was as important as any other subject taught in the curriculum. Since the time-tables of students were already overloaded, the task of convincing those who would ultimately put media education on the schools’ time-table proved to be somewhat difficult. Only a few school administrators were persuaded while teachers’ reactions varied from enthusiasm to fear.

Training courses were organized for teachers who needed support in embarking on this new challenge. Books included many practical and hands on exercises in media production. Every time a new edition of the books was published, new refresher courses for teachers were organized. A central resource library was built and teachers were encouraged to borrow material to help them plan media education lessons. Since there was the risk of some parents looking upon media education as time taken from other “more” important subjects, meetings were held for parents of all the schools that opted for media education. During these meetings the aims and objectives of media education were explained. Short training sessions were also organized for parents with the aim of helping them understand the media and enabling them to help their children (Borg cited in Silverblatt and Enright Eliceiri, 1997). The reaction of students was very

positive and parents started realizing that media education was indeed helping their children become more critical. This encouraged teachers to continue the media education programs.

V. ROLE IN CURRICULUM

Buckingham (2003) differentiates between the concept of media education (i.e. the process of teaching and learning about media) and media literacy (i.e. the knowledge and skills learners acquire). The Maltese model uses the term media education for both aspects. It builds on the belief that media usage should:

- Be an enjoyable experience for students. This enjoyment should be enhanced, not attacked or in any way ridiculed. Students should be helped to analyze why they enjoy using the media, assess it critically and enhance it.

- Be based on the participation of students who should be encouraged to change from passive consumers to active media partners. A non-directive or problem posing approach should be adopted. The teacher should take the role of a facilitator and mentor.

- Empower students by giving them the skills to acquire autonomy and develop awareness of the persuasive powers of commercial organizations and biases of political media.

The place that media education should have in the curriculum is one of the most long standing debates on the subjects. Masterman (1988) outlined three possibilities for the inclusion of media education:

"a. as a *specialist area of study* in its own right (that is "media studies");

b. as an *integrated* part of more traditional disciplines (for example, language, literature, the humanities, social studies. Media "texts", might be studied alongside print texts in any of these subjects for example);

c. as a distinct and separable "theme" within a particular subject area (so, "the media" might be studied in some depth as part of social studies, or language and communication courses)" (p. 21).

Pungente (1985) suggests two other possibilities besides the three mentioned by Masterman. Pungente claimed that media education can take the form of an extra-curricular activity outside regular school hours or a combination of these four methods. As an example of a possible combination in the curriculum, Pungente says that during a four year course in secondary schools media education would be a course on its own in the first year and it would then be integrated into at least two subjects in the second and third year. In the fourth year several optional courses would be offered.

Buckingham (2003) points out that the debate is alive today as it was twenty years ago. He reflects the tripartite distinction made by Masterman (1988). While discussing the possibility of media education as part of a particular subject he gives importance to two subject areas: media education in language, literature teaching and in ICTs.

Furthermore, Masterman (1988) thinks that media education should be part of the teaching of all subjects. Contrary to this position, Minkkinen's (1978) thinks that teaching media education as part of other subjects can mean that not all aspects of media education are covered and that "ideally, mass media education should be a subject on its own" (p. 126).

In Malta, Minkkinen's position was adopted as the basis of the media education program that was introduced in the 1980's. Media education was to be taught as a subject on its own so that it would be given enough time for its exposition while being given the desired importance. At the same time, the program encouraged the integration of particular topics in media education with other subject areas in the curriculum. Integration with other studies was easier to do in the

primary level where children were taught most of the time by one teacher. At the secondary level, where students were taught by different teachers, integrating media education with other subjects was possible but more difficult.

While these developments in media education were registered in Church schools, the situation in Government schools until 1989 was still one of "several experiments in secondary schools …" (Media Education in Schools, 1989, p13). Eventually the option adopted by the Department of Education was that media education should be taught as part of other subjects. As a result of this decision, very limited components of media education were introduced in Social Studies and Personal and Social Development at the primary and secondary levels (Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment, 2005; Department of Curriculum Management, 2006). There are also limited references in the religion text book for Form 5 (Deguara, 2003). More importance to aspects of media education is given as part of ICT courses that are an integral part of the curriculum of the primary schools and secondary schools (Department of Curriculum Management, 2006).

VI. EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Freire (1972) discusses two different concepts of education: the banking concept and the problem-posing concept of education. In his opinion the banking concept is an oppressive and dehumanizing one, while the second concept is one that liberates the human person and enhances human dignity.

The promoters of the media education program in Malta believed that media education provides the teacher with an ideal possibility to put the problem-posing concept of education in practice not only for the ideological and political reason discussed by Freire but also for a very practical reason. Buckingham (1986), without referring directly to Freire's theory, outlined a

methodology for media education that is in line with the problem-posing concept of education. "By virtue of its subject content alone, media studies implicitly challenge this traditional relationship between teacher and taught: the teacher can no longer be seen as the sole source of knowledge, or as the only person who has the right to ask questions" (p.32). Buckingham argues that "teaching about the media should be based on the view that children are *active producers of meaning*, and that this production of meaning is fundamentally a *social* activity" (p13).

VII. THE BOOKS USED IN CHURCH SCHOOLS

Between 1981 and 1984 teachers and students used notes and materials they were given by the Church's Social Communications Commission. In 1985 the first set of media books were published (Borg, Cachia, Brockdorff, Grech, Grech Marguerat and Sacco, 1985a, 1985b, 1985c). The set consisted of three workbooks to be used in the grades four to six (ages 8-10) of primary schools. These books were evaluated and revised several times and the last edition was printed in 2003 (Grech and Dandria, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c).

The books for the primary schools are basically workbooks. Information is intentionally held to a minimum while practical activities are emphasized. Consequently students learn more by actively involving themselves in projects than by passive instruction. The emphasis is on the media languages and media production. The very basic and elementary elements of the language of television, newspapers, magazines, picture stories, radio and signs are introduced to students but television is given the most importance.

In 1987, *Media Studies*, the first book for use by Forms 1 and 2 of the secondary schools, was published (Borg, 1987). This was revised in 1989. New editions were published in 1993 and 1998. These editions were the result of continuous evaluation and a response to changes in the media environment. The edition of 1993 reflects the introduction of radio pluralism in Malta and

the resurgence of the cinema which till then was a declining industry. The edition of 1998 reflects the introduction of TV pluralism and the Internet.

Following feedback from teachers, two other books were produced. The book for Form One entitled, *Exploring Media Languages. Media Education for Form 1,* was published in 2003 (Borg & Lauri, 2003). The book emphasizes the various media languages and has several sections on the production of different media products. In 2004, *Exploring the Media landscape. Media Education for Form 2* was published (Borg & Lauri, 2004). This book, on the other hand, discusses issues related to media content such as news, advertising and stereotyping within the context of Maltese society. The secondary school books are textbooks more than workbooks. They have more information than the primary ones but they still include many activities. The experiential method is far from abandoned.

The books used presently in the primary and secondary levels have two major themes (i) the exploration of media languages and (ii) the exploration of media landscapes. Each of these two themes has various topics which are explored at different levels in the three work books used in Grades 4, 5 and 6 in the junior school and two books used in Form 1 and Form 2 in the senior school. What follows is a brief description of the six major topics explored under these two themes.

(i) Understanding different media languages

There are many researchers who believe that different media have different languages (e.g. Tarroni, 1979; Crisell, 1986), others have reservations about the possibility of speaking of media languages (eg. Messaris, 1994). Buckingham (2003) highlights the importance of the study of media languages including syntagmatic combinations and paradigmatic choices as part of media education. The most popular position, and the one which this program embraces, is that

each medium has its own language. In this framework, students are helped to become familiar with the language of television, the language of newspapers and magazines, the language of radio and the language of the Internet. The media books help students:

- "read" the language of cinema and television (Grade 4, p. 12ff; Grade 5, p.10 ff, 23ff; Grade 6, p.1ff, 21ff, Form 1, p.11ff);

- "read" the language of newspapers and magazines (Grade 5, p. 14ff, Grade 6, p.12ff, Form 1, p.33ff);

- "read" the language the radio (Grade 4, p. 33ff, Grade 5, p. 33ff, Form 1, pp. 51ff);

- "read" the language of the Internet (Form 1, p. 61ff);

- understand the similarities and dissimilarities of the languages of look alike media e.g. cinema and TV, newspapers and magazines (Form 1, p.12-13, p. 34).

(ii) Producing media products

Media productions by students are considered to be of particular value to develop both a more in-depth critical understanding of the media as well as an exploration of students' emotional investment in the media. A detailed account about the different media education strategies used in several countries on "reading" and "writing" aspects can be found in Bazalgette, Bevort and Savino (1992). In his discussion of the subject Buckingham concludes that "practical, hands-on use of media technology frequently offers the most direct, engaging and effective way of exploring a given topic. It is also the aspect of media education that is most likely to generate enthusiasm from students" (Buckingham, 2003, p.82).

The media education program in Church schools stresses the production or "writing" element by giving importance to the class activities, class projects and exercises meant to

stimulate the interest of the children in issues related to the media. The students are encouraged to:

- learn that the techniques and technologies used by each medium influence the language of that medium (Grade 6, p.33; Form 1, p.34);

- be able to produce their own media products (Grade 6, p34; Form 1, p.21, 49, 50);

- use the persuasion techniques used by advertisers to create counter-ads (Form 2, p.65);

- encourage schools to produce a web page (Form 1, p. 68).

(iii) Children's use of the media

Many students, and indeed many parents, are unaware of the number of hours which children and teenagers spend watching television and using the computer. As a result, becoming aware of the importance of managing one's media diet, is one of the stages of media education (Thoman, 1995). It is only when students are made aware of their heavy use of the media that they realize the importance which media play in their life. One of the aims of the Maltese program is to raise the student's awareness of the amount of time they dedicate to using the media and therefore their importance in the formation of their attitudes and lifestyle. The media books help the:

- monitoring of TV use by students (Form 2 p 10; Grade 6, p. 20; Grade 4 p. 24);

- monitoring radio use (Grade 4, p.36; Grade 5 p. 34; Form 2, p. 15);

- monitoring use of newspapers and magazines (Form 1, p. 10; Form 2, p. 25, p. 14);

- monitoring use of Internet/email and understand basic uses of Internet (Grade 6, p.31; Form 1, p. 65-67; Form 2, p.11; Form 1, p. 62; Form 2, p. 14);

- develop in students an awareness of risk and a sense of self regulation (Form 1, p. 67).

(iv) Media content

'Media content' is a phrase which embraces many issues. Media content does not offer us reality but a representation of reality. More than a transparent window on the world media content gives us more a mirrored or mediated version (Buckingham, 2003, McQuail, 2005). A discussion of how different aspects of media content are communication in media education programs in different countries is given in French and Richards (1994), as well as von Feilitzen and Carlsson (2003). In this media education program special attention is given to news, advertising, stereotyping and the portrayal of violence and sexual images.

- the different aspects of news, its gathering and reporting (Grade 5, p. 30; Grade 6, pp. 14- 17; Form 2, pp. 40-53);

- advertising and the language of persuasion (Grade 4, pp. 31-32; Grade 5, pp. 19-20; Grade 6, p. 29; Form 2, pp. 55-68);

- stereotyping and negative content such as violence and pornography (Form 2, p.32- 37; Form 2, p.39; Form 2, p.40);

- the notions of genres, bias and representation (Grade 5, p. 26; Form 1, p. 32; Form 2, p. 53).

(v) Ownership and organizational aspects

Media messages are constructs made in a particular organizational frameworks with a definite ownership structure and processes of production. This relationship is both important and very complex (Croteau and Hoynes, 2003). Masterman and Mariet (1994), Minkkinen (1978) and Buckingham (2003) highlight the relevance of these aspects to a program of media

education. The books used in Maltese Church schools – at the primary but much more at the secondary level – give considerable importance to the following.

- the role and functions of the media in society (Form 2, pp. 18-20);

- understanding the structure of the advertising industry (Grade 5p30; Form 1, p48; Form 2, p64);

- becoming aware of the commercial potential of the Internet (Form 2, p.62);

- the structure of a print media organization (Form 1, pp.45-46;

- the relationship between ownership structure and content (Form 2, p. 21, p.42, p. 53).

(vi) The Maltese context

What applies for ownership and organizational structures applies more to the societal setting wherein a particular media organization is set up. A country's economy, political system and regulatory framework, for example, are essential to the understanding of media industries and media messages. As a consequence, the media books give importance to this aspect in the primary and, much more, in the secondary level. The books strive to:

- create awareness of different media organizations in Malta (Grade 5. p. 33; Grade 6, p. 13; Form 1, p. 62; Form 2, p. 22);

- give an account of the history of the media in Malta (Grade 5, p.14; Form 1, p.14; Form 2, pp. 23 – 28).

VIII. THE PRESENT SITUATION

The Ministry of Education published a heavily revised National Minimum Curriculum - "Creating the Future Together" - in December 1999. The curriculum caters for the education of students between the ages of three and sixteen. This was a very important step in the development of media education. It lists fourteen educational objectives "that are mainly

intended to contribute to the best possible formation of every person so that good Maltese and world citizens can be produced" (p. 47). Objective 8 concerns the teaching of media education. It outlines the knowledge, skills and attitudes that such a program should help students acquire (Appendix A).

The content of the objective was formulated in close collaboration with the organizers of the media education program in Church schools and reflects the objectives and methodology of that program. The curriculum builds around the topics: media language; media and society; media content and media organizations. Under the heading "media content" an element of media writing or production is included.

The National Minimum Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 1999) - which is binding on all schools - includes media education as one of the objectives of a holistic education and should be taught in all schools, State, Independent and Church Schools. Authoritative Church documents on the international and local level as recent as 2003 (Arcidjocesi ta' Malta, 2003) make the teaching of media education mandatory as part of education in Church schools.

A closer look at the actual situation uncovers some problems. The National Minimum Curriculum should have given the necessary push to bring a qualitative leap in the teaching of the subject in all schools. It did not as it was not followed through with the necessary organizational infrastructure. Fifteen focus groups were set up to implement the Curriculum. None specifically targeted media education. The position of the Educational Officer responsible for the subject has been vacant for more than seven years.

While the National Minimum Curriculum explained in detail the aims and objectives of the program, it did not however specify whether media education should be taught as an interdisciplinary subject or as a subject on its own. The decision by the state schools' authorities

to integrate media education with a number of subjects meant that in actual fact, the onus was on the individual teachers. Different teachers had to integrate media education in their own subject. Since the majority of teachers have not been given any training in media education teachers find this difficult to do and as a result media education is not being given the importance it deserves.

Although most Church schools are teaching the subject in Grades 4-6 of the primary level and Forms 1 and 2 of the secondary level, some schools have diminished the importance that the subject used to receive in past years. Some school administrators point to overcrowded curricula as a problem.

As Buckingham (2001) rightly points out, "well-intended documents and frameworks are worthless without trained staff to implement them" (p.13). Up to the present day, most of the teachers in the Faculty of Education undergoing training are still not given formal training in media education. It is only the primary student teachers who are given a course of 14 hours on Media Education. The rest of the student teachers cover some topics as part of other courses. Unless the student teachers are given more training, both theoretical and experiential, the idea of teaching media education across the curriculum will not succeed. Teachers cannot teach what they themselves do not know or have not experienced.

IX. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

Media education is needed today more than it was needed twenty five years ago as the media landscape is now omnipresent. In a country of 316 square kilometers and a population of 400,000 there are today five television stations; two are owned by political parties. Cable TV has a penetration of about 80% of households. In fact almost all homes have at least one TV set and most have two sets. Half of Maltese houses are connected to the Internet, and the number is constantly increasing. Students spend hours using the Internet and watching television. The

complete changeover to digital by 2010 will increase interactive services as well as more TV stations. The number of daily and weekly papers is 14. Instead of one radio station there are today 12 stations broadcasting on a national frequency.   IPaqs, Ipods, computer games and mobiles are part of the personal accessories of all but especially of the young. Such a media landscape makes a pronounced media education program a need.

We are suggesting the following initiatives for the Maltese context.

1. Lack of teacher training was identified as one of the main shortcomings of the program. This situation can be changed only if the Faculty of Education at the University of Malta provides both a component of media education as part of the training of all future teachers as well as a more advanced unit to those students who wish to deepen their studies in the area.

2. A new concerted effort between decision makers, schools administrators, teachers, parents and media professionals is essential for the success of the future of the program. Such an effort can produce a holistic strategy which addresses such problems as an overcrowded syllabus and lack of resources. Up till now media professionals were hardly part of the equation. Their inclusion has several advantages. An experimental project being carried by the Malta's Environmental and Planning Authority is bringing together teachers, students and media professionals with the aim of producing newspaper articles, web sites, and TV and radio spots about the environment.

3. Experience has shown that media education is only given its deserved status and importance when it is treated as a separate subject. The "integration" strategy has not really worked in the local environment. Teaching media education as a subject on its own should be the norm especially in secondary schools. The "integration" strategy should be carried out over and

above the teaching of media education as a separate subject especially in those years where this is not catered for.

4. Media education could also be taught outside school hours. One such experiment is being conducted for the first time this year. Two summer schools operating between July and August decided to introduce media education as part of their program. Students are of different ages and come from different schools. Among other things, students will be designing adverts, conducting a radio interview, interviewing a celebrity, visiting a radio station and designing the front page of a newspaper. If this is a success, it can become a yearly initiative by the operators of summer schools.

5. It is also being suggested that media workbooks and textbooks should be written in Maltese. Although English is the language of instruction in many Church and independent schools, yet in government schools, lessons are taught in Maltese. Having media workbooks and textbooks produced in Maltese will enable teachers in government schools to use these books with their students.

If we had to evaluate the success of media education in Malta, we would describe it as moderate. Our experience of media education in Church schools is much more positive than that in government and independent schools. Our suggestions should help surmount the difficulties that are being faced today mainly by putting into practice the official documents on the subject and the addressing of the problem caused by an overloaded syllabus. The newly appointed Commissioner for Children has, in the past year, spoken several times about the importance of media education in the social, educational, and cognitive development of the child and is working hard to facilitate the teaching of this subject in all schools. But perhaps the greatest impetus will be the over saturation of the media's presence. In a country totally surrounded by

the sea we have learned that the best strategy for survival is teaching people how to swim and not building a dyke. Similarly, the ever increasing inundation by the media will be a stimulus for media educators to increase people's ability to swim in this environment. Hopefully media education will, more and more, appear to be the solution.

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APPENDIX: NATIONAL MINIMUM CURRICULUM

Objective 8: Media Education

Knowledge/Information

Through the curricular experience, students should acquire knowledge in the following areas:

• the Media and Society: basic knowledge of the different sectors of the media; knowledge of the media's social function; the media's relations with political and economic institutions; the symbiotic relationship between the media and society; how the school and the media influence each other; the Press Act and Censorship; the media and democracy;

• the organization of the media: knowledge of the media's different property structures and of the media as a transnational industry; recognizing the importance of the social impact on the consumption of media products; knowledge of the different roles of people working in the media; knowledge of the different systems concerning the financing of the media;

• media content and language: knowledge of the different genres found within different media systems, their differences and relevance for the audience; knowledge of the media's interpretative aspect (e.g. media stereotypes); knowledge of the history of the most important media sectors; knowledge of the Internet;

• the media as an educative agent: the educational possibilities provided by the media; different modes of participatory and individual learning that have become possible; the media as a catalyst of change and transformation in education;

• issues concerning the way the media operates: the invasion of privacy, the distortion of truth, slanted views and propaganda, partisan bias, etc;

• understanding conventions concerning the media.

Skills

Through the curricular experience in this field, students develop skills in the following areas:

- language of the media: basic skill in using equipment, techniques and materials connected with different aspects of the media; the production of simple media items; use of the computer and Internet facilities as: (1) a vehicle for using the media, (2) a unique medium in itself;

- media content: the development of basic skills in writing letters, reports and investigative stories; writing simple TV and radio scripts; expressing oneself through the use of the computer; sifting through and analyzing what appears in the media, including advertisements; striking a balance in one's choice between educational programs and others which provide entertainment;

- society and the media: an analysis of the media's role in society and in our specific culture; working to render information technology accessible to everyone, including children with disabilities or different abilities;

- media organization: analysis of the product bearing in mind the limitations of the organization which produces the product; familiarization with the process of production by different media, including different forms such as sign language, the Braille method, subtitles, etc.

Attitudes

Through the curricular experiences in this field, students develop these attitudes:

- language of the media: the development of a critical attitude towards the media; appreciation of the aesthetic value and the cultural impact of the media's different sectors;

- media content: development of a critical attitude based on a system of personal values; the development of a selective attitude regarding media consumption;

- society and the media: readiness to defend freedom of speech; a critical attitude towards the media;

- media organization: development of a critical attitude in connection with the organizational need of production.