

EDUCOMMUNICATION: A THEORETICAL APPROACH OF STUDYING MEDIA IN SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS

EDUCOMUNICACIÓN: UN ENFOQUE TEÓRICO DEL ESTUDIO DE LOS MEDIOS EN ENTORNOS ESCOLARES

EDUCOMUNICAÇÃO: UMA ABORDAGEM TEÓRICA DO ESTUDO DOS MEIOS DE COMUNICAÇÃO EM AMBIENTES ESCOLARES

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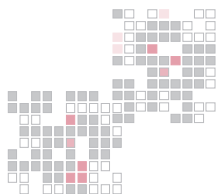
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ABSTRACT

Edu-communication is a field of study founded by the Latin American theoretical currents of liberating pedagogy, popular communication and cultural studies. This essay reviews their foundation and recent theoretical development in Peru. The three fundamental contributions of edu-communication are as follows: recognizing inter-subjectivity as being a critical element for understanding the interactions between individuals and media, the attention assigned to cultural communicative practices and political dimensions, and its focus on the individual rather than on the technological device, deviating from the more instrumental theoretical perspectives.

KEYWORDS: EDU-COMMUNICATION; MEDIA EDUCATION; LATIN AMERICA; PERU.

RESUMEN

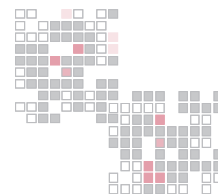
La educomunicación es un campo de estudio fundado por las corrientes teóricas latinoamericanas de la pedagogía liberadora, la comunicación popular y los estudios culturales. Este trabajo revisa sus fundamentos y desarrollo reciente en el Perú. Las tres contribuciones fundamentales de la educomunicación son: el reconocimiento de la intersubjetividad como elemento crítico para la comprensión de las interacciones entre individuos y medios, la atención a las prácticas culturales comunicativas y su dimensión política, así como su enfoque centrado en las personas antes que en los dispositivos tecnológicos, diferenciándose de otras perspectivas más instrumentales.

PALABRAS CLAVE: EDUCOMUNICACIÓN; EDUCACIÓN MEDIÁTICA; AMÉRICA LATINA; PERÚ.

RESUMO

A educomunicação é um campo de estudo fundado por correntes teóricas latino-americanas da pedagogia libertadora, da comunicação popular e dos estudos culturais. Este trabalho revê os seus fundamentos e o desenvolvimento recente no Peru. As três contribuições fundamentais de educomunicação são: o reconhecimento da intersubjetividade como um elemento crítico para a compreensão das interações entre indivíduos e os media, a atenção às práticas culturais de comunicação e a sua dimensão política, bem como o seu foco primeiramente centrado nas pessoas do que nos dispositivos tecnológicos, opondo-se às teorias mais instrumentais.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: EDUCOMUNICAÇÃO; EDUCAÇÃO DE MÍDIA; AMÉRICA LATINA; PERU.



1. Introducción

The increasing penetration of mass media since the middle of the previous century has created an intense bond with the school as a site for experimentation and the society's cultural formation. The most recent technological innovations have invigorated this relationship by alternating between two theoretical interests: on the one hand, it explains how media can contribute in improving the learning quality, and on the other hand, it describes the method of empowering citizens to live in a mediated environment. From this dual interest, during the mid-80s, a theoretical field called educommunication has developed in Latin America, and currently constitutes a dynamic line of research with a life of its own. Initially, it was a field where the disciplines of education and communication converged; subsequently, it became a field of interdisciplinary interest with theoretical tensions. This article addresses these issues. We present the Latin American characteristics of educommunication from its origins to contemporary times and its recent development with respect to academic output in Peru.

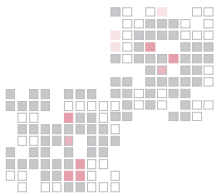
At the outset, it is important to recognize that there is great conceptual dispersion in referring to the same problem of the study, that is, the relationship between media and school. Concepts such as media education or media pedagogy; media, visual, or informational literacy; new literacies; and digital or informational skills appear in the literature, sometimes as synonyms or as different models. For the purpose of clarity, we define educommunication as being a theoretical field interested in the dialogic relationship between media (so-called “mass” or “traditional,” “new” or “social,” or “information and communication technology [ICT]”) and its impact on the educational environment or on its main actors: students, teachers, and parents.

2. A Brief Historical Review

Since there is evidence regarding educommunication from the first half of the twentieth century in terms of initiatives and projects in different parts of the world, it is impossible to attribute a specific nationality to this concept. For political and idiomatic reasons, the Anglo-Saxon concept of “Media Literacy” became the most widespread. Even today, it is almost impossible to find publications in English related to Latin American authors—including Mario Kaplún, Francisco Gutiérrez, or Daniel Prieto Castillo—who began developing the concept of educommunication during the 1960s. Other Southern authors, such as Paulo Freire, Luis Ramiro Beltrán, Jesús Martín-Barbero, or Néstor García-Cañclini, have achieved more recognition, albeit delayed.

Educommunication differs from others in its focus on the political and cultural dimensions of the communicational processes, considered to be a characteristic feature of the theories developed in Latin America. Various authors agree about the existence of a paradigm in communication research conceived from this region (Barranquero, 2011; Waisbord, 2014; Dutta, 2015). This development is a product of a set of “historical singularities”—military dictatorships, economic dependency, cultural imperialism, exclusion of popular sectors—which conceived communication as being a instrument central to social change and entrenchment in the democratic system. (Barranquero, 2011, p. 4).

In addition to the aforementioned “historical singularities,” the process of theoretical construction of a Latin American paradigm was marked by its fundamental criticism about the hegemonic paradigms of those years, similar to Harold Lasswell's functionalism or Everett Rogers' diffusionist approach. As indicated by Beltrán (2004), the Latin American theorists were the first to contradict these ideas that dominated the com-



munication studies: “The gross failure of the classic development model was soon acknowledged everywhere. [...] There was now ample recognition that without major structural changes securing equity, within nations and between nations, a genuine, democratic, and widespread development was impossible”.

The failure of many projects supported by these models facilitated the creation of alternative proposals; this further led to the emergence of communication for social change founded on the ideas of popular participation and the empowerment of citizens through the appropriation of media (Dutta, 2015).

According to Waisbord (2014), in contrast to the academy in the USA or Europe, the research in Latin American communication shares common theoretical roots, built from an interdisciplinary, and not limited, interest in the study of human communication, a subject that occupied the main scientific interest of “developed” countries. This feature allowed a more dynamic—and sometimes chaotic—view of the mass communication phenomena and the technological impact on social life, analyzed from more complex cultural and political perspectives.

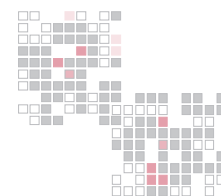
While the global impact of the theory produced in Latin America has been limited—due to the epistemological marginalization of approaches different from positivists or functionalists, the existence of a scarce dialog between Northern and Southern authors, and the cultural barriers that have prevented its proper broadcasting—some of its constituent elements have also been recognized: the insistent search between theory and practice, critical nature of its production, its interest in power relations or the censorship of the communicative dependency and its research agenda based on culture, identity, or social and political development issues, among other characteristic features (Barranquero, 2011). It is observed that many of

these traits nurtured the educommunicative approach.

3. Theoretical Bases of Educommunication

In 1980, with the UNESCO’s publication of the McBride report, two important points are indicated: first, the need of a fairer global communicative model is institutionalized, wherein the marginalized countries—which includes the Latin American countries—have a relevant participation in the production of messages, and second, the recognition of certain media influences over people initiated a cross-disciplinary convergence between education and communication. This convergence, which acquired the label of educommunication in Latin America, was introduced in response to media power with the objective of providing students with the tools to develop a critical reception. Thereon, Ismar de Oliveira (2009) defines educommunication as being a dialog field on four issues: qualified reception, popular education, collective articulation for social change, and its recognition as a right that must be included in public policies, in recent years.

A theoretical reference for educommunication is the work of Paulo Freire; this is because it rescues the political dimension of social change-oriented education and its liberating function, which enables students to produce and construct knowledge related to their environment through dialog. Furthermore, Freire (1970) criticized the vertical and authoritarian sense of the education system, proposing the construction of a dialog enriched by the students’ experiences and their way of viewing the world. Likewise, he highlighted the orality as being the beginning which links the learner’s emotion with the written word, introducing new types of textuality beyond the canonical. In its proposal, communication is not limited to the printed culture, but includes all the orality and media that al-



lows free expression for individuals.

Len Masterman (2001), British theorist of Media Literacy, published a conceptual framework that acknowledges the influence of educational thought of Freire and allows us to identify at least five relevant aspects that act as theoretical premises of educommunication: (i) the recognition of media messages as social constructions; (ii) the development of self-hermeneutic languages, codes, genres, and conventions of any type of text; (iii) the role that the audience plays in negotiating the meaning of textual signifiers; (iv) the problematization of the representation process in media linked to power and ideology issues; and (v) the political, economic, and cultural impact of a for-profit media industry existence.

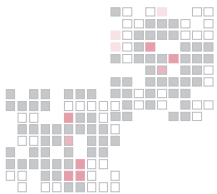
Another pivotal reference to the educommunicative proposal, from the cultural studies, is proposed by Martín-Barbero who stated that printing had defined a paradigm of communication marked by the linearity of the written text, which determined the development of the modern school institution. This linear model resulted—as criticized by Freire—in subordination of learners to reading one unique type of text, i.e., the printed text. In this context, the school has consistently refused to accept the cultural off-centering traversed by the book as an intellectual hub and as a privileged tool for accessing information, ignoring the changes in the circulation paths of knowledge as a profound social transformation. Further, that is where the second dynamic that configures the communicative ecosystem in which we are engaged is situated: it is dispersed and fragmented, and it can circulate outside the sacred places and social figures who administered it. Moreover, the school orients toward adopting defensive attitudes against communication ambients that are extraneous to education or toward disguising underlying problems with technology:

The challenge posed by a communicative eco-

system leads to the emergence of a different culture, different manner of viewing and reading, and different manner of learning and knowing. The defensive attitude is limited to identifying the best of the traditional teaching model with the book and anathematizing the audiovisual world as a world of frivolity, alienation, and manipulation (Martín-Barbero, 2003). For Martín-Barbero, new cultures and other methods of viewing and reading as well as learning and knowing emerge. Mass media alters the hierarchies and circuits of knowledge within the family (to provide access to all types of information, for example, as media promotes children's participation in the affairs of the elders) and school (to break the rigid sequentiality with which information was delivered). On similar lines, he emphasizes that these changes constitute defining “revolutionary movements” that indicate the need for upgrading an educational system that does not respond to the social system, where media plays a dynamic cultural role at all levels.

Finally, for supporting popular communication, Latin American educommunication undertakes a fundamental role of reducing social inequalities and overcoming the obstacles to accessing knowledge, ideas from which diverse tele-education projects emerged mainly through community radio stations. The disinterest of many Latin American governments to provide quality education—understood as training of critical citizens—stoked the need of using mass media for these purposes. Media, from this perspective, is seen as an opportunity for encounter, expression, and citizenship training; further, educommunication was interested in these processes (which include citizen journalism and literacy through media experiences) (Renó, 2015).

To summarize, educommunication proposes its model based on dialog—as an expression of horizontal communication—and the recognition of political and cultural contexts from which



it conceives learning as being a liberating process that assumes knowledge to be a collective creation. It endorses the concept that society is inherently mediated and that the school cannot be a mute spectator when faced with such a condition. Considering this view, media plays a mediation or intermediation role that does not necessarily facilitate the communication process but creates new problems and challenges which require more complex viewings. Thus, this theoretical perspective discusses the notion that technology is, implicitly, an end in itself, and instead, it proposes a dialogic approach based on communication as a tool for reflection and not just for the transmission of content along with the consequences that it entails. (Barbas, 2012)

4. Research on educommunication

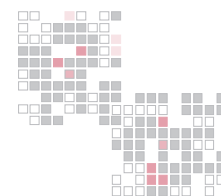
In Peru, education is a recurring topic on the local research agenda for two important reasons: the poor results obtained by the country in international tests, such as the PISA report, and the growing penetration of media technologies in society. Thus, this leads to, on the one hand, a stronger discussion regarding the quality of educational service in the country, and on the other hand, the urgency to have public policies about educational technology. Since the 1990s, successive governments initiated large-scale technology purchase projects: models of satellite tele-education, the creation of technological resource centers (computer laboratories) and one-on-one projects, such as *One Laptop per Child (OLPC)*. This stimulated the development of empirical research aimed at evaluating the communicative processes, based on the access and characteristics of media use, as well as for recognizing the material and symbolic barriers presented by the integration and technological appropriation processes in school contexts. This evidence has allowed a dialog between authors and various theories.

Work assessing the availability, access, and

consumption of mass media among students was initially motivated by a growing concern among teachers and parents, as well as educational authorities, regarding the effects that audiovisual media consumption could produce among students (Quiroz, 2013). It became increasingly more logical to think that education is not only a pedagogical and psychological process through which one can acquire knowledge but is also media that broadens the perspective of the world, impacting the methods of socialization and communication, value reality, as well as certain behavioral patterns and attitudes. According to Marshall McLuhan (1957), the walls of the schools begin to erode with the intrusion of media into people's lives.

The initial researches allowed the confrontation of the immediatist vision regarding the harmful effects of media on the youth. Similarly, they inspired and promoted further studies in extracurricular areas that young people associate with media and the weight of these conditions while interpreting the changes that arose. The images and sounds supported by media allowed for new perspectives and knowledge of the outside world, permeating the imagination of children and youngsters, accustomed to the discourse imposed by adults. Technologies are conceived as supporting new links and new possibilities of access and knowledge production. At all times and from the beginning, the purpose was mainly to rethink education by integrating new resources to achieve a quality education, to abandon moralistic stances and convictions of media, and focus on the points of the necessary transformations that education should promote. As noted by Martín-Barbero, the most useful theoretical approaches hinder the understanding of cultures originating outside the school system or the ones that are expressed in media:

The divorce of the culture used by teachers to think and talk from the culture that



the youth uses to perceive and sense grows deeper every day. In the meanwhile, the school attempts to cover its communication crisis by implementing rituals of technological modernization and by reducing its conflict, with the audiovisual and computer cultures, to a discourse of moral lamentations (Quiroz, 1993, p. 17).

Educommunication provides a perspective that exceeds the moralist and defensive criticism against media, and particularly, against television, which has led to gaining control of its content or regulating its consumption in schools. For educommunication, the critical use of television and other media triggers participation allowing new senses and meanings. This implies the consideration of the public in its heterogeneity, given the unequal distribution of material and symbolic goods, and admitting that the link between users and media is not primarily rational and cognitive but emotional. The critical reception leads to a perspective that signifies the return to the subject and its logical and crucial possibilities; this issue will be much more important for the development of the Internet. Nowadays, the discussion regarding the genuine role that audiences perform prevails and demands more theoretical attention because of its dynamic statute. (Livingstone, 2015) In a similar manner, nowadays, the role of collective participation is discussed: Participatory culture shifts the focus of literacy from one of individual expression to community involvement (Jenkins et al., 2009, p. 4).

From the educommunication perspective, technology has always played an important social role, linked to notions of progress and power. The control of the technological means and the cultural changes generated through them are topics of great interest to the social science and political science disciplines. Manuel Castells, in his book *Communication Power*, argues that “the commu-

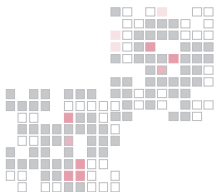
nication process decisively mediates the way in which power relationships are constructed and challenged in every domain of social practice, including political practice.” (Castells, 2009, p. 4).

In the field of communication, Latin American authors have been busy building a political perspective on media and its role in society. Martín-Barbero (1993, 2006) proposed a theory of mediation¹ in which the people have a vital role in negotiating the meaning as well as in creating an identity from the messages produced by media. Unlike the functionalist proposal, Martín-Barbero (2006) defends people’s ability to resist, appropriate, and subvert these messages: “The place that culture occupies in society altered when the technological mediation of communication was discontinued from being merely instrumental to becoming structural” (p. 285).

Carlos Scolari (2015) believes that the concept of mediation allowed for a central category of analysis beyond the communicative field, presenting culture as a negotiation process and symbolic transaction. Additionally, he proposes that the interventions can be understood as cultural interfaces in which it is possible to analyze the interactions of people to learn about their perceptions and desires so that media can propose dialogs with their users from representations that are part of the popular culture. Thus, the theory of mediations bridges gaps with other contemporary theories such as the theory of convergence of Jenkins et al. (2009) as they reject technological determinism and underscore the role of media as creators of culture. Further, they focus on people and not on technological artifacts.

All theoretical production in educommunication, so far, had prioritized mass media. The considerable growth of the Internet and the de-

¹ As noted by Couldry & Hepp (2013): Martín-Barbero “decisively opened the door to a “media research” that traversed a wider domain of inquiry than only mass media messages, although sadly his book remained little noticed in the English-speaking communications research field for more than a decade after its translation.” (p. 194).



velopment of new mobile technologies led to a new phase of cultural acceleration that had a definitive impact on the school; moreover, new discourses focused on school revolution owing to the integration of digital devices that aim to solve all emerging educational problems. The school becomes a test to demonstrate the method in which technology can positively impact society and therefore occupies an important place in the contemporary theoretical debate. Education begins technologizing its speech focusing on the importance of devices: first through computers and subsequently through portable technologies such as laptops and more recently through tablets and phablets. But while educational authorities discussed the best method of assimilating these new media in the classroom, technological penetration in society continues to erode the culture at a different pace: from the manner of accessing information, previously limited to books, to even the way we communicate, with a resignification of time and space.

5. Digital Gaps and Natives: Concepts under Discussion

Theoretically, it has been widely reported that two concepts were incorporated into the research and discussed from the field of educommunication. On the one hand, the concept of digital divide, which explains the asymmetries in access and appropriation of digital technologies and their consequences (Warschauer, 2010), and on the other hand, digital native, which explains the behavior and attitudes of a generation born in a highly-digitized environment (Prensky, 2001a, 2001b). All this was accompanied by a narrative of society 2.0, which became the epitome of theoretical production since then.

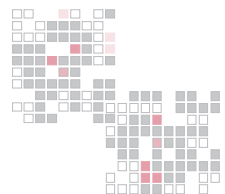
The digital divide concept is based on three successive approaches: physical access, the ability to use new technology and the customs and practices generated by technologies. In the scientific

and political hegemonic discourse, the access perspective prevails (Mansell, in press).

For multilateral organizations such as the World Bank, incorporation of technologies in schools is “the most expeditious, economical, and extended manner of reducing the digital divide internally within the country and also between countries. It is precisely in schools, especially in public schools, where access can be democratized” (Sunkel, Trucco & Espejo, 2013, p. 5). Consequently, investment in educational technology is worth millions of dollars in the Latin American region. Considering the approach to skills, the type of digital skills that the new generations should be trained with and, above all, the purpose of such training (whether to be consumers, citizens, or both) is debated world over. As noted by Warschauer (2010), the digital divide is not binary but involves several degrees of control. In the same way, it is also not limited to the supply of computers or Internet but implies observing new ways of creating a sense in multimodal and multimedial forms.

There is consensus in various authors that today’s digital divide is a complex problem of social inclusion that incorporates the three approaches, not in an exclusive but in a combined manner: access, use, and appropriation. The role that media plays, as a facilitator and promoter of participation and collaboration cannot, however, be exempt from a critical perspective about everything that involves participation. The production of personal data or media content of a different kind in transmedia platforms also entails problems related to ethical or legal aspects and must be part of media educational offer that should exist in schools.

The second concept under discussion was the digital native, which allowed for extensive—but valid—debating and sharp criticism for being founded on a biologic and children essentializing premise, as if digital abilities were innate with-



out considering cultural and political variables that distinguish types of access and use (Helsper & Eynon, 2009; Quiroz, 2013; Ames, 2016). As demonstrated theoretically and empirically, children and young people surfing the Internet quickly, for downloading music, online gaming, and searching information does not imply that they are ready to take full advantage of ICT or that they can handle it all that well for access and knowledge production purposes (Ames, 2016). Prensky (2010), almost 10 years after coining the term, partially acknowledged that its theoretical definition deserved a review.

6. Cultural Transformations: Some Findings in Peruvian schools

In the last decade, Peruvian researchers (Ames, 2014, 2016; Cano, 2015; Mateus, 2015; Quiroz 2013; Trinidad, 2005; Trinidad & Zlachesvsky, 2013; Villanueva y Olivera, 2012) were interested in understanding the cultural transformations caused by media technologies. The prevailing methodology of their work is ethnographic, which allows focusing on the inter-subjectivity of the actors in more detail. In addition to exploring uses and practices, they incorporated the symbolic dimension for explaining the meaning of media technologies in everyday use. Peggy Ertmer (1999) noted the need of addressing two types of barriers that prevent the integration of ICT in the educational context: first-class—extrinsic, relating to time, access to resources, and training that the actors possess—and second-class—intrinsic, which refer to the attitudes, beliefs, and resistance. While relations between the two barriers are interdependent (Bingimlas, 2009), there is a theoretical interest in understanding the subjective considerations by the educational actors, as they seem to be “significant predictors” of success or failure of technology integration in the school ecosystem (Mueller & Wood, 2012).

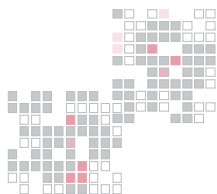
Successive studies have demonstrated the ex-

istence of discursive and practical differences among school actors: students, teachers, and parents. For example, many opportunities that the Internet provides for the development of knowledge, access to modernity and even globalization, according to parents, are far from the concrete practices of students, who find a space to recreate the relationship with their peers in this situation by playing, experimenting and having fun (Ames, 2015; Quiroz, 2013). Indeed, “the main reason for using a computer is recreation, through games and consumption of media; they base in this their almost immediate assessment of the potential of the XO-1² in its ability to facilitate these tasks” (Villanueva & Olivera, 2012).

Another significant erosion, advised by Martín-Barbero in his theory of mediation, is related to the reconfiguration of power. The growing presence of ICT acquires a particular dimension in day-to-day practice: “now children and adolescents are the ones who know the most, not adults, which inverts a well-established knowledge hierarchy” (Ames, 2016, p. 13). Similarly, the evidence collected in the Peruvian case allows the recognition that many of the practices of technology integration tend to be arbitrary. They do not consider the voice of the actors and end up causing severe distortions in social structures; they undermine the figure of teachers against students or parents against teachers (Cano, 2015; Mateus, 2015).

Additionally, a “contemporary myth” shared by parents and students leading them to have a high degree of trust on the internet as a quick solution to the problems (Quiroz, 2013) has been established. In the same way, they believe that “knowledge that is accessed through traditional education is not sufficient and that this is required to have an added value, which is obtained through new

2 It is the name given to the laptops used by the project *One Laptop per Child*, which Peru was part of. Other countries in the region participated in the project too: “Plan Ceibal” is conducted in Uruguay and “Conectar Igualdad” in Argentina, among other projects.



technologies” (Trinidad, 2005, p. 14). For them, technologies represent the opportunity of knowing the world and, perhaps by doing so, compensating for the enormous scarcities resulting from the poor educational quality of public schools in the country. On the other hand, for many teachers, ICT represents too much of a pressure, which in many cases leads them to reject them and experience fear (Mateus, 2015). Therefore, the criticism made by the limited impact of the technologies in schools, condensed on the idea that they insist on the same transmissive and unidirectional practices, but using new devices. This is another consequence of top-down technological interventions that neither serves the socio-cultural contexts nor the perceptions of the actors.

The interaction of individuals with media—as cultural products—constitutes a formative experience. Even though we discuss the essentialism of the concept of the digital native, we agree on the idea that the own interaction is educational in itself: Individuals, acquire an awareness about certain languages and codes that we then imitate, but this is in addition to the commercial dimension of media or at least it is suspected as such. Research with children who, in a self-taught manner, learn to create and consume certain media content on different platforms permeated by advertising revealed that they could develop an ability to identify it, especially when it is intrusive and interferes with their recreational purposes (Trinidad & Zlachesvsky, 2013, p. 172) While we discussed the concept of essentialism digital native, we agree on the idea that the interaction itself is educational: In this regard, several countries in the region, including Peru, have begun to define media skills that are required for this purpose in their national curricula.

To Conclude: Educommunication’s

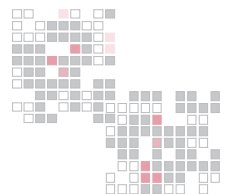
7. Contribution

Multilateral statements promoted by UNESCO

in Grünwald, in 1982; in Paris, in 2007; and in Braga, in 2011 have insisted on the requirement of explicitly betting on a primary media education that is intended to empower citizens to fully exercise their freedom in a democratic state. Seen as a fundamental civic requirement, the theoretical field of educommunication is valid as well as necessary to understand, from a less instrumental and more dialogic perspective, the role of media in contemporary society, characterized by an increasing medialization.

Meanwhile, much of the research produced in Western countries focuses on evaluating the efficiency of media to convey messages, or in the field of education, to improve the quality of learning; in the South, however, over the last decade, research has mainly focused on understanding the complexity of the interactions between people and media from a cultural and political perspective. The educational context has been an important space for understanding these practices and the correlation between a greater technological penetration—in and out of the school—and certain educational results—both in the acquisition of specific media skills and the construction of shared meanings about these technological practices.

The educommunication field has proved to be a fertile territory for problematizing the tensions generated by the penetration of technological media in the society; however, it has been poorly disseminated, which has resulted in only a limited impact. Many Latin American states have focused on the execution of large-scale projects related to the purchase of technologies to solve educational problems, without understanding the cultural and political consequences derived from this. Some of these projects, such as the OLPC in the Peruvian case, proved to be a failure, similar to what several diffusionist projects had faced decades before. “Unfortunately, the introduction of XO seven years ago did not change the inequalities that Peruvian education suffers from: poorer schools still



have poorer education, and their very poverty and lack of resources prevents a better use of this new resource” (Ames, 2015, p. 6374). Technology integration policies imposed top-down are, according to evidence, counter-productive.

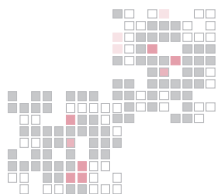
In brief, we can indicate three fundamental ideas from the field of educommunication. First, the interest in knowing the voice of the actors that implies the recovery of inter-subjectivity as a basic notion for studying the impact of technology on society. The efficiency in the transmission of content is evident, in a functionalist sense but fathoming the emotions and the particular worldviews of each individual, as proposed by Freire is difficult. Second, educommunication serves the political and cultural dimensions of communicative practices, which means explor-

ing how the power relations and hierarchies alter in the spaces where the meanings of technologies, their content, and the processes involved are negotiated. Third, educommunication accords priority to the human being as an objective and, as such, ensures that it is of importance not only as a consumer but also as a citizen; further, it seeks empowerment rather than protectionism because it believes that the education of free individuals with high critical sense is possible.

Finally, it is important to remember that media education is the result of an interdisciplinary convergence: the problem of technology integration as well as ownership, skills development, and training of critical subjects, demand more than a communication theory, a theory of interaction that combines theoretical contributions.

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