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Editorial

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Editorial

Beatriz Villarejo Carballido y Laura López Calvo

Editoras de C&SC - Communication & Social Change

Nos encontramos ante el segundo volumen de la revista *Communication & Social Change*. Un año después de la primera publicación continuamos trabajando para seguir consolidando los principios que dieron origen a esta revista con la determinación de seguir publicando trabajos que contribuyan a la mejora de las sociedades.

La multidisciplinariedad sigue marcando este segundo número al contar con aportaciones de diferentes disciplinas como la lingüística, la pedagogía o la sociología lo que aporta una gran riqueza al número. Así pues, en el primer artículo Naomi S. Baron propone establecer un marco de investigación para analizar las consecuencias potenciales de los diferentes tipos de conectividad respecto a la naturaleza de la comunicación. En el segundo artículo Shirley R. Steinberg, autora referente en pedagogía crítica y estudios culturales, analiza entre otras cuestiones cómo los medios contribuyen al desarrollo de lo que la autora denomina una *nueva infancia* y propone pedagogías democráticas en las cuales niños y niñas sean considerados agentes activos que pueden enfrentarse a las complejidades del poder y de la opresión de la cultura de consumo. A continuación, Semedo y Gutiérrez Esteban centran su estudio en Cabo Verde para conocer las opiniones del profesorado en relación al programa “Mundu Novu” y el papel de las TIC en la superación de la brecha digital. Finalmente, en el cuarto artículo encontramos como Oliver y Santos analizan la literatura científica para situar el estudio del ciberacoso producido a través de aplicaciones y plataformas online y proponen actuaciones desde la socialización preventiva para su erradicación. Finalmente Cabré con la revisión de *Cyberbullying: bullying in the digital age* de Kowalsky, Limber y Agatston completa esta reflexión sobre una de las lacras a la que debemos dar respuesta.



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Consequences of Connection: Loneliness, Reading, and Robots

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Consequences of Connection: Loneliness, Reading, and Robots

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Abstract

Modern communication technologies are reshaping the ways humans connect with one another as well as how we converse with machines of our own making. Our question in this essay is whether digital communication is changing the nature of conversation and, if so, what the implications may be for us as people. Our analysis identifies three sets of parameters for approaching these issues: linguistic (structure of conversations, communication medium, modulating the conversation to suit the perceived needs of our interlocutor, controlling the conversation), social (inner- or other-directed behavior, front stage or back stage behavior, strong or weak social ties, loneliness), and cognitive (level of intellectual engagement). We use these parameters to explore some of the linguistic, social, and cognitive consequences of electronically-mediated communication, of social reading onscreen, and of conversing with social robots.

Keywords: Conversation, electronically-mediated communication, loneliness, reading, social robots.



Consecuencias de la Conexión: Soledad, Lectura, y Robots

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Resumen

Las tecnologías de comunicación modernas están reformando las vías por las que las personas humanas conectan unos con otros además de cómo conversamos con las máquinas que hemos creado. Nuestro análisis identifica tres tipos de parámetros para aproximarnos a estos temas: lingüísticos (las estructuras de las conversaciones, el medio de comunicación, el control de la conversación), sociales (comportamiento interno o dirigido por otro, comportamiento público o privado, lazos sociales fuertes o débiles, soledad), y cognitivos (nivel de compromiso intelectual). Utilizamos estos parámetros para explorar algunas de las consecuencias lingüísticas, sociales, y cognitivas de la comunicación mediada electrónicamente, de la lectura social en pantalla y de las conversaciones sociales con robots.

Palabras clave: conversaciones, comunicación medida electrónicamente, soledad, lectura, robots sociales.

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Start with three conversational vignettes. The first took place between two young women, sitting in a subway car in northwest Washington, DC, embarking on a trip downtown. (I was in the seat behind them.) One woman was alternating between looking at her mobile phone and chatting, while the other was wholly focused on conversing. The second kept tapping the first on the shoulder, trying to grab her attention.

Both were deaf, and both were using American Sign Language. The challenge, of course, is that ASL is a visual language. If your eyes are on your phone's screen, you can't see the moving hands of your interlocutor. As I witnessed the second woman repeatedly work to keep the conversation with her friend alive, I was reminded of all those occasions on which people who can hear (and speak) must vie for the attention of their companion who is preoccupied with text messaging, sending a Facebook update, or checking out news headlines.

The second vignette also involves people, though this time the connection is necessarily virtual and is focused on a particular shared interest: books. The scenario I am talking about is online social reading sites such as Goodreads, a platform designed to help individual readers discover and talk about books. Goodreads enables members to post comments on books, form book groups, and write reviews. By 2014, there were over two million reviews each of such runaway bestsellers as *Twilight*, *The Hunger Games*, and *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*.

In the third vignette, only one of the conversational partners is human. The interlocutor is a robot, in fact a social robot, meaning one that interacts with human beings. My first such encounter was in 2005 at Japan's Aichi Prefecture World Expo, where a receptionist robot – looking very much like a 1960s airline stewardess – was there to point visitors to their desired destinations. You could ask for directions in Japanese, Korean, or English, and “she” replied in remarkably clear speech. A more recent example (though not yet a physical reality) is the robot in the 2012 movie “Robot and Frank”, in which Frank's family buys him a personal robot to attend to household tasks and remind Frank to take his medicines.

All three scenarios involve conversation, but with a digital dimension. Is digitally-based communication altering the nature of conversation and, if so, what might the consequences of these changes be? To explore these

questions, we will focus on the three scenarios we have illustrated: electronically-mediated communication, social reading onscreen, and conversation with social robots.

The framework we will use for this investigation is composed of three sets of parameters: linguistic, social, and cognitive. After introducing these analytical dimensions and then providing some background context relevant to digital communication, we will use the parameters to probe some of the effects of digital technology on the nature of human conversation.

Before setting out, it is important to acknowledge what the analysis presented in this essay is – and is not – attempting to accomplish. The goal is to lay out a research framework for thinking about the potential consequences of several types of digital connectivity. Some of the technologies discussed, such as social reading networks and social robots, are still in their relative infancy. Similarly, although electronically-mediated communication has been with us for several decades now, we are just beginning to understand the impacts it may be having upon its users. And so, what follows is more a research agenda than an account of questions already answered.

Linguistic, Social, and Cognitive Parameters

We begin by looking, in turn, at the parameters in terms of which we will be examining the consequences of digital connection.

Linguistic Parameters

Our linguistic tools center on domains relating to language use: the structure of conversations, communication medium, the ways in which we modulate conversation to suit the perceived needs of our interlocutor, and how we (as speakers or writers) control the conversation itself.

Structure of Conversations. There are many potential ways of talking about the structure of conversations, such as turn-taking, openings and closing, and conversational threads (Berglund, 2009; Sacks et al., 1974; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973; Schriffrin et al. 2001; Yates et al. 2006). Another is to look at the content of what is said.

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Paul Grice's "maxims" for structuring conversation (1975) are commonly invoked when doing discourse analysis. Grice's four maxims are:

- Maxim of quantity: try to be as informative as possible, giving as much information as is needed but no more.
- Maxim of quality: try to be truthful, not giving information that is false or unsupported by evidence.
- Maxim of relation: try to be relevant, saying what is pertinent to the discussion.
- Maxim of manner: try to be clear, brief, and orderly, avoiding obscurity and ambiguity.

The problem with Grice's maxims is that in actual conversations, people often don't follow them. We withhold information or utter falsehoods. We get off-topic or can be obscure (either intentionally or otherwise). And so on. While we have learned to expect and often tolerate this kind of behavior in conversations with one another, our question is whether such acceptance extends to some of our digitally-based exchanges.

Communication Medium. Much of human conversation takes place using spoken language, whether face-to-face, via a telephone, or employing a voice-over-internet protocol (VoIP). Members of literate societies have the additional option of conducting conversations through writing, as was earlier common in the exchange of letters and now is practiced in email and text messages. The third medium is sign languages such as ASL, predominantly used by people with severe hearing impairments but also found in some monastic communities (Barakat, 1975).

In a digital world, the written medium has generally held pride of place, though with technological improvements in both VoIP and speech recognition programs, voice continues to gain ground. While sign language is viable in video-based systems (such as Skype or YouTube), those with hearing impairments commonly turn to written messaging (Bakken, 2005).

Modulating Conversation to Suit Perceived Needs of Interlocutor. In our conversations, we often modulate the way we speak (or write or sign) in light of what we perceive the linguistic abilities of our interlocutor to be. This practice is most obvious in the conversations that adults, or even older children, have with young children. Linguists and psychologists use the

term “child-directed speech” (also sometimes known as motherese or baby talk) to describe these types of modulations (Ferguson, 1964; Snow & Ferguson, 1977). Among the common adaptations are use of simplified vocabulary and syntax, slower speaking speed, and clearer-than-normal enunciation. Other features, especially used in addressing very young children, are high pitch and repetition.

Many of these same features appear in the conversational style known as “foreigner talk”, used in addressing people lacking proficient command of the language we are speaking (Ferguson, 1975). Similar adaptations (especially high pitch and repetition) sometimes also occur when we address pets (Hirsh-Pasek & Treiman, 1982). Our question here will be whether the adaptive process occurs in some varieties of digital conversation.

Controlling the Conversation. The last linguistic parameter is “controlling the conversation” (Baron 2008a). Think about the pre-digital world. We might cross the street to avoid encountering an individual coming our way. Perhaps we dominate a face-to-face conversation, affording our interlocutor little opportunity to speak. On the telephone, we might place the interlocutor on speaker phone, making public a conversation he or she assumed to be private. In written communication, we might ignore a letter we receive. As we will see, digital communication broadens the opportunities for orchestrating conversations.

Social Parameters

We move now from linguistic to social parameters. Our discussion here draws upon the work of three sociologists: David Riesman (inner- versus other-directed behavior), Erving Goffman (front stage versus back stage behavior), and Mark Granovetter (strong versus weak social ties). We also introduce a variable that may seem paradoxical in the world of digitally-connected communication, namely loneliness.

Inner- or Other-Directer Behavior. In 1950, David Riesman published *The Lonely Crowd*. Riesman argued that American middle-class character had shifted from being what he called inner-directed, guided by

internal values, to other-directed, whereby our values and actions are strongly influenced by others. While there has been considerable critique of “national character” studies (including Riesman’s) over the years, Riesman’s basic distinction remains a useful sociological tool.

Front Stage or Back Stage Behavior. A second important sociological distinction dating to the 1950s appeared in Erving Goffman’s *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959). Drawing upon a theatre analogy, Goffman compared what he called front stage behavior with back stage behavior. The first is how we present ourselves to the external public. By contrast, back stage behavior is how we interact with friends and family when we don’t feel ourselves to be on display.

Strong or Weak Social Ties. The third sociologist, Mark Granovetter (1973), was interested in how social networking between people works. While most of the social networking theory at that time looked at strong relationships between pairs of individuals, Granovetter suggested that looser (weak) ties across groups are also important to social cohesion and therefore worthy of study.

Loneliness. Our final social parameter isn’t a theory but rather a consequence of our behaviors. That consequence is loneliness.

Echoing the sentiments of her former teacher David Riesman, Sherry Turkle (author of *Alone Together*) argues that “If you don’t have a capacity for solitude, you will always be lonely” (NPR Fresh Air, 2012). If we are always on our digital devices, either engaging in conversation or eavesdropping on the communiqués of others, we are almost never alone. When we do happen to find ourselves alone, we tend to look for ways to connect with some one or some thing.

In a cross-cultural study I did of mobile phone use by university students, a large number reported that they turned to their phones to kill time, such as while waiting for a bus or walking from one place to another. That way, they didn’t feel isolated, alone with only themselves. More recently, I have been asking groups of American undergraduates about the last time they were alone and the last time they were bored, and what they did about it. Overwhelming, they turned to their digital devices to

ameliorate the situation. In recent work I have been doing on attitudes towards reading print books versus reading onscreen, several college subjects reported that they found reading print to be too boring, too lonely. There were no mental or social distractions of the sort available when they read on a digital device with internet connection.

Cognitive Parameters

Beyond linguistic and social parameters, we also need to think about cognitive dimensions of the issue of conversation and connection. Our focus will be on the level of intellectual engagement when it comes to online reading activity, considering such issues as the amount of effort, amount of reflection, and amount of concentration of the conversational participant.

Consequences of Digital Conversation

Having identified linguistic, social, and cognitive parameters that are potentially at work when we connect with interlocutors using some form of online communication, we turn to three specific online interactive contexts: electronically-mediated communication, social reading onscreen, and conversation with social robots. Not all parameters are directly applicable to each of these contexts, but collectively, the parameters offer a framework for discussion.

Consequences of Electronically-Mediated Communication

First, some background on digital communication. General use of computers to converse with other people began in the 1970s and 1980s, with successive development of email, computer conferencing, bulletin boards, newsgroups, listservs, and forms of instant messaging. In the early 1990s, text messaging (on mobile phones) became available in Europe through GSM's Short Message Service (SMS), spreading by the end of the century to large swaths of the world. Meanwhile, by the late 1990s, instant messaging (on personal computers) had largely become the digital communication medium of choice among young people in America. Soon after came social networking platforms, along with rapid expansion of texting in the US. In its earlier

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phase, online communication was referred to as computer-mediated communication (CMC), although with the proliferation of mobile phones and texting, many scholars refer to the spectrum of digital discourse as electronically-mediated communication (EMC).

In the relatively early days of computing, even before development of the internet, concerns were expressed that computing was a socially-isolating experience. The 1970s and 1980s saw the emergence of a hacker culture in which individuals (typically male) spent endless hours in basement computer laboratories at research universities or at home in their bedrooms, writing and troubleshooting computer code. Where university students had access to the ARPANET (the US Department of Defense's Advanced Projects Agency Network, built in the late 1960s) or hobbyists could log on to the internet (which was to replace ARPANET), possibilities emerged for text-based online gaming, including Multi-User Dungeons (MUDs).

Whether these users worked entirely on their own or were connected via a dial-up modem to fellow MUD denizens, the concern was how many hours were being spent in social isolation. The personal computer revolution brought with it heightened apprehension that even young children would fall victim to such seclusion. Psychologist Seymour Papert (1993) argued that Turtle LOGO, the geometry-based program he created for youngsters, would foster both social and intellectual cooperation. At home, however, many young people ended up working alone at their machines for countless hours.

Computing became increasingly social with the growth of instant messaging on personal computers: first ICQ (in 1996) and then AOL's Instant Messenger – AIM (in 1997). Soon after followed a spate of social networking sites, including Friendster (2002), My Space and Second Life (2003), Facebook as a platform open to everyone (2006), Twitter (2006), Instagram (2010), and Snapchat (2011). By 2014, Facebook boasted more than 1.3 billion users. In a world of roughly 7 billion people (of which 1.3 billion Chinese have no legal access to Facebook), this is an impressive amount of social connectivity.

Mobile phones became another tool for online connection. In the pre-smartphone days, texting proved an inexpensive way of either one-way messaging or turn-taking conversation. With the proliferation of smartphones, all the functionalities of internet-based communication on computers became available in your hand.

With this background in mind, we turn to some linguistic and social parameters relevant for electronically-mediated communication.

Linguistic Parameters

Written Medium. As of 2013, there were nearly 6.8 billion mobile phone subscriptions in the world ([International Telecommunication Union, 2014](#)). Much of the communication we do on mobile phones – not to mention on computers or tablets – is written rather than spoken. While the use of writing is self-evident in the case of such platforms as email, IM, or Facebook, writing has come to predominate over voice on mobile phones. The tipping point came in the US in 2008, when users first averaged more text messaging than voice calls on mobile phones ([Leggatt, 2008](#)). That shift occurred in the UK in 2011 ([BBC News, 2012](#)).

Interestingly, though texting has significantly supplanted voice communication, particularly when using a mobile phone, some digital millennials report that text messaging is no substitute for “real” communication. In survey research on mobile phone practices among university students ([Baron, 2011](#)), several Japanese complained about *keitai* (that is, cell phone) *mairu* (which, in Japan, is more akin to texting than western email): “communication through *keitai* email can trick people’s minds as if they were engaged in real communication”; “in some cases, [mobile phone] communication can lack substantial contents”. An Italian student observed that: “[texting on mobile phones] is replacing communication in the literal sense of the Word”.

Controlling The Conversation. Electronically-mediated communication heightens our ability to exert control over our conversation with an interlocutor, including to shorten or halt communication in the first place. Focusing on text messaging, we see that given its asynchronous character, we can respond to messages at our own convenience – if we respond at all. By choosing to text rather than speak, we can keep the message short, not needing to engage in the common pleasantries of voice-to-voice conversation or to hear out our interlocutors on additional topics of their choosing. Other forms of control include checking caller ID to decide whether or not to take a call, forwarding messages to audiences for whom

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such missives were not intended, and turning down “Friend” requests on Facebook.

These sorts of controls commonly result in curtailing rather than fostering conversation – a linguistic consequence of communicating online. Were the participants face-to-face, they might not be able to avoid conversation.

Social Parameters. If digital exchanges are often highly controlled and don’t always feel like “real” communication, what kind of interaction are they? The answer is that in many instances, these social exchanges are superficial.

Other-Directed Behavior. *Strong and Weak Ties.* With the explosion of online social networking, the internet has enabled users to connect up with potentially countless others. In some cases, such as friending old high school sweethearts on Facebook or joining a neighborhood listserv, we have at least some In Real Life relationship with the individuals. Yet at other times, such as following politicians on Twitter or posting to an author’s blog, we are connecting up, however loosely, with strangers.

In both instances, the social connection is weak at best. Following Riesman’s model, we tend to become members of the online crowd (especially when “connecting” with strangers). With occasional exception, strong personal friendships don’t develop here. Internet users may end up remaining isolated members of a lonely crowd – despite all the social communication around them.

Using Granovetter’s scheme, we generate additional weak ties on the internet, but may be doing little for strong ties. In the mid-2000s, a Pew Internet & American Life Project study reported that while the number of strong ties was essentially the same for both internet and non-internet users, the number of weak ties was slightly larger among internet users (Boase et al. 2006). More recent research from the Pew Internet project reports that those who use communication technologies (the internet, mobile phones) have a larger overall number of social ties than those who do not or who utilize them sparingly (Hampton et al. 2011).

But what about strong ties? When they asked in 2010 about the number of “close friends” Americans had, Hampton et al. found the average to be 2.16, an increase from 1.93 when the same question was asked in 2008. The

causal role of the internet or mobile phones in either developing or maintaining those ties is, of course, difficult to ascertain, as is the significance of a .23 rise. What we can confirm is a marked drop in the US over the past 30 years in the number of strong ties. While the American General Social Survey reported 2.94 social confidants in 1985, the number for 2004 was only 2.08 – in essence, from three people down to two whom you could always count on (McPherson et al. 2006).

Front Stage Behavior. Given the largely public nature of online communication, there is much front stage behavior as we craft our presentations of self for friends and strangers alike. (The literature on electronically-mediated communication has been replete with studies and discussions of such front stage activity – e.g., Ling & Pedersen, 2005; Hogan, 2010). A good illustration is the description that a college student gave of her Facebook page: “me on my best day”. As she explained, she crafted Facebook entries to make her look her best, not necessary the way she typically was (Baron, 2008b, Chapter 5).

Loneliness. If much of our life online constitutes other-directed, front stage behavior, it is hardly surprising that loneliness is a potential consequence. In the early days of the internet, some researchers cautioned that online activity might “reduce ... social involvement and psychological well-being” (Kraut et al., 1998). Norman Nie (Nie & Hillygus, 2002) worried that you “can’t share a beer with a friend on the internet”. Over the years, Barry Wellman and his colleagues have countered that the internet does not reduce social capital. They argue that on the contrary, the internet maintains existing relationships and builds new social ties rather than diminishing them (e.g., Wellman et al., 2001; Rainie & Wellman, 2013).

But the issue of loneliness continues to resurface. Stephen Marche (2012), writing in *The Atlantic*, asks if Facebook (and online social networking more generally) is making us lonely, arguing that “the more connected we become, the lonelier we are”. The late Clifford Nass and his students reported troubling correlations between the amount of time teenage girls spent on social networking and their level of social comfort, along with level of self-esteem. By contrast, face-to-face communication, including making eye contact with your interlocutor, strongly correlated with a positive sense of social well-being (Pea et al., 2012).

Undoubtedly, generalizations about the personal consequences of online communication can be dangerous. As Robert Kraut and his colleagues demonstrated more than a decade ago, people with strong personal social comfort in physical relationships tend to fare well on the internet, while those who are less socially adept do less well (Kraut et al., 2002).

Yet regardless of one's level of social comfort, it is clear that the internet invites us always to be connected with other people – through actual discourse or vicariously. Our waking hours are increasingly spent in the virtual company of others, leaving less time for daydreaming, people-watching, or being alone with our own thoughts. The question therefore becomes whether such constant connection is reshaping the way we engage in activities that have both individual and social sides. The activity we now focus on is reading.

Consequences of Social Reading Onscreen

The popularity of online social networking platforms such as Facebook and Twitter has fueled interest in a new genre of internet-based interaction: social reading. The largest of the networks, Goodreads, was created by Otis and Elizabeth Chandler in 2007 to connect individual readers with each other and with authors. (Goodreads now boasts over 25 million members). The number of social reading platforms continues to grow, with some of the newest including Zola (connecting readers with professional reviewers, authors, and publishers) and Librify (geared in part to connecting members of physical book clubs).

Reading as a Social Activity. The idea of reading being a social activity is hardly new. Its roots trace back at least to the eighteenth century, when London coffee houses flourished as settings where gentlemen could settle in to read newspapers and discuss their contents. With the growing proliferation of printed books (along with the appearance of periodicals such as the *Tatler*, the *Spectator*, and *Gentleman's Magazine*), booksellers began setting up book clubs in their stores where, for a small fee, readers could gather and share both in the wares and in conversation (Darnton, 1991).

By the nineteenth century, groups of women were actively meeting to discuss works of literature. In the US, many of these gatherings were

intentionally limited to females, who feared they “might be silenced by ... men’s presence” (Long, 2003). A century later, many book clubs continued to be dominated by women (at least in America). Often the function of these book clubs, like their eighteenth-century antecedents, has been at least as social as intellectual (Heller, 2011).

Technology has been responsible for expanding opportunities for book discussions in the presence of others. Radio and television provide what we might call armchair book clubs: You listen to an author and interviewer, sometimes having the opportunity to call in (or now text or tweet) comments or questions. Oprah Winfrey’s television book club, running (with a hiatus) from 1996 to 2011, afforded a vast audience the opportunity to hear about books and encouragement to read them (Farr, 2005).

With development of the internet, new opportunities unfolded for cultivating a social side of reading. Before the launching of Goodreads, two book-sharing platforms – LibraryThing and Shelfari – invited readers to catalogue their personal book collections and display them online. These days, YouTube hosts a vast array of video bookshelf tours that individuals have created of their own holdings.

Media guru Steven Johnson (2010) argues that reading these days (especially when we read on digital devices) is quintessentially social:

Even when we manage to turn off Twitter and the television and sit down to read a good book, there will be a chorus of readers turning the pages along with us, pointing out the good bits.

Meanwhile, distributors of eBooks and eReaders have developed their own versions of online social reading. Users of Amazon’s Kindle have the option of sharing the highlights and annotations they make on their own eBooks with others reading the same passages (and vice versa). Kobo developed a “Pulse Indicator”, whereby words that other readers have highlighted grow larger on your own eReader screen when you come upon the same passage. The goal? Both sharing – and alerting new readers in advance as to what others consider to be the “good bits”.

And then there is Bob Stein, creator of the Institute for the Future of the Book. Viewing books not as closed, completed physical things but rather as places “where people congregate to hash out their thoughts and ideas”, Stein maintains that the reification of ideas into printed, persistent objects obscures the social aspect of both reading and writing, so much so, that our

culture portrays them as among the most solitary of behaviours. This is because the social aspect traditionally takes place outside pages (Stein, 2013).

It comes as no surprise that Stein's newest venture is called Social Book. As Stein asserted in an interview with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, "This idea that we read by ourselves is a relatively recent idea and is going to go away" (Prpick, 2013).

Given the explosive growth of social networking – including for display, discussion, and reviews of books – it may be tempting to conclude with Otis Chandler that "Books are one of the strongest social objects that exist" (Chandler, 2010).

Are Chandler and the others right?

Reading as an Individual Activity. Historically, the majority of people who have been literate have done most of their reading – and their thinking about what they read – by themselves. This is not to say that discussion with others may not follow. The issue is, how much do you first wrestle with the text yourself? That wrestling commonly takes the form of an implicit "conversation" (of the imagined sort) with the author.

In his essay "On Reading", Marcel Proust advised that readers should focus their attention on their relationship with the author, not on others who might be reading the same work. (In Proust's words, when we allow another person into the discussion, our dialogue with the author "dissipates immediately" – Proust, 1971, p. 31) Proust urges us to be active readers: "We can receive the truth from nobody... we must create it ourselves" (p. 35). Reading entails a trusting friendship with the author where we can be bluntly honest in expressing our opinions. We never have to worry, as we might when discussing a book with real-life friends, "What did they think of us? Didn't we lack tact? Did we please?" (p. 53, p. 55).

Proust's sentiments continue to resonate with many contemporary authors. Henry Hitchings had this to say about how digital technology leads us away from individual contemplation:

The real issue with the internet may be that it erodes, slowly, one's sense of self, one's capacity for the kind of pleasure in isolation that reading has, since printed books became common, been standard (quoted in Kingsley 2010).

Novelist Cynthia Ozick (2000) echoes this theme when she sums up the interplay between solitude and social in the world of reading:

Print first made possible the individual's solitary engagement with an intimate text; the Gutenberg era moved human awareness from the collective to the reflective. Electronic devices promote the collective, the touted 'global community' – again the crowd.

Writer Judith Shulevitz (2002) pithily summed up this perspective in her closing line of a piece in the New York Times Book Review: "You read your book and I'll read mine."

Social Parameters. How do these observations about reading as a collective or individual activity translate into the social parameters of other-directed and front stage behavior?

Other-Directed and Front Stage Behavior. Social reading leads us to privilege the conversations we have with other readers over our implicit conversation with the author. When we are discussing with other people what we have read, we understandably have the temptation to worry what they think of our interpretation ("Did we please?"). When social reading takes place online, there is the added tendency to stage ourselves (typically for unknown others or those with whom we have weak ties). Like the student whose Facebook page was "me on my best day", postings we make to social reading sites risk being formulated with display taking precedence over the reader's honest take on the text.

Cognitive Parameters. The act of reading can be hard work, particularly if the text is intricate or analytical. How should we go about the task?

In 1940, a professor of philosophy at the University of Chicago named Mortimer Adler published his now-classic *How to Read a Book*. In the book, Adler instructs us that reading is serious business:

The most direct sign that you have done the work of reading is fatigue. Reading that is reading entails the most intense activity. If you are not tired out, you probably have not been doing the work (p.110).

How do you "do the work"? Adler explains his own method, which he recommends to his readers:

One of the reasons why I find reading a slow process is that I keep a record of the ... thinking I do. I cannot go on reading the next page, if I do

not make a memo of something which occurred to me in reading this [one \(p. 111\)](#).

Adler recommends this approach not just for academic reading but also for pleasure reading that has real substance (Think of Tolstoy, not pulp fiction).

The challenge for digital social reading is whether the kind of reading Adler advocates is harder to accomplish online than when reading as an individual activity. Will reviews by those millions of Goodreads members diminish our incentive to work through the books ourselves? Will we rely upon Kobo's Pulse Indicator to point out "the good bits" before we have a chance to make up our own minds as to which passages are significant?

Equally at issue is doing our own reading on a digital device (a computer, an eReader, a tablet, a mobile phone) that has an internet connection. The challenge here is concentrating on the reading rather than drifting off to other Internet functions – the temptation to be multitasking.

Here are the kinds of questions we need to be examining about reading on a screen as opposed to in hardcopy:

- How seriously do we engage with the author?
- Do we "do the work" as we read?
- Do we skim and scan rather than read linearly?
- Do we reread?
- Do we remember what we read?
- Are we multitasking?

Granted, not everything we read merits the level of concentration that Adler advocates, and reading hardcopy hardly inoculates us against inattention or distraction. Yet there is a growing wealth of data suggesting that reading onscreen, especially a screen that has an internet connection, makes us prone to compromise our engagement with the text ([Baron, In Press](#)). Another consequence of connection.

Thus far we have been focusing on the linguistic, social, and cognitive implications of using digital communication devices to interact virtually with other people. However, with continuing advances in robotics (and in artificial intelligence more generally), a growing number of our "conversations" are with computer-driven programs and hardware. We therefore now turn to the question of what kind of language we use – and want to use – when conversing with social robots. Derivatively, how might

increased communication with computer-based devices affect the kind of communication we have with other human beings?

Consequences of Conversing with Social Robots

The meaning of the term “social robot” is at once self-evident and vague. If a robot is a machine that can be programmed to do work autonomous of human control, a social robot is a physical robot or a disembodied computer program that interacts with human beings, especially using natural language. Examples we have already mentioned include the robot in the movie “Robot & Frank” and the receptionist robot at Japan’s Aichi Prefecture World Expo. The vagueness in the definition comes from the fact that many phenomena we don’t think of as social robots technically are, such as Apple’s Siri and IBM’s Watson, along with (even less obviously) automated telephone answering programs running on natural language processing engines.

Impressive technological strides are being made both in physical components of embodied social robots and in their linguistic abilities. Researchers have created robots that recognize and respond to human facial expressions (e.g., [Bulletin of Keio University, 2012](#); [Hanson, 2009](#); [Tang, 2007](#)). Addition of such expressions might lead us to speak to such robots with more conversational sincerity than we would to a robot that has no realistic face. (For more on issues involving expression of emotions and human-robot interchange, see, for example, [Breazeal \(2003\)](#); [Nishio et al. \(2012\)](#)).

Speech recognition software has also become surprisingly good. We now have social robots – be they virtual platforms like Siri or embodied robots such as David Hanson’s Philip K. Dick ([Nova Science Now, 2011](#)) or Kokoro’s Actroid robots ([Lim, 2013](#)) – that “speak” naturalistically and appear to comprehend what humans say to them.

Technology is increasingly enabling us to fabricate social robots that look, sound, and respond like humans. The question is, how closely connected do humans want to be with these products that we ourselves have built? Robotacists speak of the “uncanny valley” problem, first identified more than 40 years ago by Masahiro Mori ([Mori, 2013](#)). Up to a certain point of likeness, people feel positive empathy with a humanlike robot.

However, as that likeness approaches humanness, we tend to feel what Mori describes as revulsion.

With these successes – and caveats – in mind, we turn our attention to the linguistic and social ramifications of connections with social robots.

Linguistic Parameters

Structure of Conversation, Controlling Conversation. In talking about Grice's conversational maxims, we noted that people often violate them in conversations with one another: We are not always informative, truthful, relevant, clear, and orderly. Accepting these deviations is part of the give-and-take that makes up both conversation and human interpersonal relationships.

But what would happen if social robots engaged in such violations of Grice's maxims? If the robots lied to us or went off on verbal tangents? While there is no way of sending our colleagues at the office or our relatives back to the factory for re-tooling, we might well opt to do so with robots engaging in these behavior that we tolerate from humans.

The issue is one of control. Although we usually can't control other people's conversation, we can build social robots that converse "reliably" (in the sense of adhering to Grice's maxims). We can even tweak the programming to include parameters such as "only speak when spoken to" or "always say 'please' and 'thank you'". Obviously, we also have the choice of adding in humor or playfulness (which has been done to "humanize" some of the social robots that have been built to look – or respond – as much as possible like people). Again, however, the decision-making remains within human control.

Modulating Conversation to Suit Interlocutor. Much as people adapt their speech when conversing with young children or non-native speakers, research suggests that people display similar adaptive behavior in addressing robots. In a study comparing the way young adults converse with a robot as opposed to another person, Kriz et al. (2010) analyzed how subjects directed a robot or a human interlocutor to complete a physical navigation task. (Unbeknownst to the subjects, the robot's movements were actually controlled by a hidden human confederate.) The subjects' robot-directed speech mirrored child-directed speech or foreigner talk in many ways: louder volume (particularly common in foreigner talk), higher pitch, and

hyper-articulation (compared with how the same subjects spoke with another person).

Social Parameters

Front Stage Behavior. At least some of our interactions with social robots are based upon our controlling the conversation, including modulating our speech to accommodate what we perceive to be the robot's comprehension skills. In such situations, there is a tendency to engage in front stage behavior, since our language is orchestrated rather than spontaneous. While not striving to impress robots, we might well be looking to impress other people in our midst with our cleverness in the way we address the robots or test their limitations.

Weak Social Ties. The 2013 movie “Her” depicts a romantic relationship between a lonely man (Theodore Twombly) and a sophisticated operating system (Samantha). But like the robot in “Robot & Frank”, the likes of Samantha don't yet exist. Ties with today's social robots remain weak and are likely to do so in the foreseeable future, even as the number of social robots in our lives increases.

Loneliness. Weak-tie surrogates for human-to-human interaction are, however, already a reality. Child-minder robots have been developed in Japan. And, as a companion for hospital patients and the elderly, the Japanese have created Paro, an instantly-lovable robotic baby harp seal.

Sherry Turkle worries that with the coming of social robots such as Paro, people will look to robotic rather than human solutions to problems of their own loneliness or that of people for whom they have responsibility (such as aging parents). If internet connectivity may already be increasing isolation in some people, it seems paradoxical to use another digital technology – a social robot – for alleviating that isolation.

Concluding Comments

We have considered some of the linguistic, social, and cognitive consequences of conversations in which we engage when using electronically-mediated communication, when reading socially on digital devices, and when interacting with social robots. Admittedly, our journey

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has been peppered with caveats like “may” or “might”. As I indicated at the outset, this essay is exploratory, not definitive.

We have observed a number of trends already at work. Linguistically, we have seen that digital technologies enhance opportunities to be controlling in our conversations by curtailing access to us (in electronically-mediated communication) or engineering the kinds of conversational responses we are willing to accept (from social robots). Socially, we suggested that digital technologies privilege development of other-directed and front stage behavior, along with proliferation of weak ties. Their effect on strong ties remains to be seen, though despite all the opportunities for connectivity, many people remain lonely. Cognitively, we cautioned that reading onscreen (whether by yourself or in social context) potentially undermines a desire to “do the work” of tackling complex books and figuring out independent responses before engaging with the crowd.

Conversation – including when it is subtle, annoying, or complex – is part of our definition as humans. As our dependency upon digital platforms (and on digital creatures) grows, it will be critical to monitor how these evolving forms of connectedness reshape conventional linguistic and social interaction.

Since written language affords us more control than does speech, it seems plausible that an increasingly number of our conversations with people will be written. (Spoken conversation could be more emphasized in communicating with social robots. After all, we can program them not to talk back). Socially, we may need to work harder at developing strong personal ties, since we can only say at this point that the internet boosts weak ties. Also socially, given how much of our online conversational efforts involve other-directed, front stage behaviors, we must not lose track of our inner-directed opinions and back stage presentation of self. Cognitively, we need to decide what we want our relationship to be with the world of reading.

People created computers, mobile phones, the Internet, natural language processing, and now social robots. It is up to us to determine the consequences of the connectivity they bring.

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Contextualizing Corporate Kids: Kinderculture as Cultural Pedagogy

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Contextualizing Corporate Kids: Kinderculture as Cultural Pedagogy

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Abstract

Consumer culture has an overwhelming impact on the young consumer generation. International corporations often focus on children and youth for a major part of their income generation. This focus is a component of the changing nature of society. Instead of consumers discovering their own wants and needs, corporations create and dictate exactly what people want. This article discusses how media and corporation-generated consumption have helped to form what I call the new childhood. My analysis investigates the footprints of power created by the corporate producers of kinderculture and the effects on the psyches of our children and youth. The understanding of kinderculture can create democratic pedagogies for cultural, personal, and school levels of society.

Keywords: Kinderculture, Cultural Pedagogy, Cultural Studies, Corporate control of Childhood, Media and Youth.

Contextualización de las empresas dirigidas a la infancia: cultura infantil como Pedagogía Cultural

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Resumen

La cultura de consumo tiene un abrumador impacto en la generación de jóvenes consumidores. Las empresas internacionales a menudo se centran en los niños y en los jóvenes para una parte importante de su generación de ingresos. Este enfoque es un componente de la naturaleza cambiante de la sociedad. En lugar de que los consumidores descubran sus propios deseos y necesidades, las empresas crean y dictan exactamente lo que quiere la gente. Este artículo trata sobre cómo los medios de comunicación y el consumo generado por la empresa, han contribuido a formar lo que yo llamo la nueva infancia. Mi análisis investiga las huellas de poder creado por los productores corporativos de cultura infantil y los efectos sobre la psique de nuestros niños y jóvenes. La comprensión de la cultura infantil puede crear pedagogías democráticas para los niveles personales, culturales y escolares de la sociedad.

Palabras clave: Kinderculture, Pedagogía Cultural, Estudios Culturales, Control Empresarial de la Infancia, Medios de Comunicación y Juventud.



With our crashing tidal waves of war, politics, religious influences, struggles, and advancing web 3.0 globalization comes an incredible phenomenon, *kinderculture*. Joe Kincheloe and I introduced this phenomenon in 1997 (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 1997) as a socio-theoretical conversation about (and with) the children and youth of the late twentieth century. Our points were underpinned by the notion that kids were being infantilized by a corporate/media agenda from popular culture, schools, and adults. Yet, while being considered "too" young for almost anything, at the same time, these young consumers were being marketed to as seasoned adults. Almost twenty years later, the result is a consumer public of little girls, for example, who wear chastity rings and hip-clinging jogging pants with "Kiss My Booty" in glitter on the backside. With one voice, adults tell kids to stay clean, avoid sex and drugs, go to Disneyland, and make vows of celibacy... with another other voice, the corporate side markets booty clothing, faux bling, and sexualized images of twelve-year-olds. After three editions of *Kinderculture: The Corporate Construction of Childhood* (2011), this article adds to *kinderculture* by continuing to insist that new times have created a new childhood. However, paradoxically the current new times are conservative and liberal, sexual and celibate, and innocent and seasoned. Evidence of this dramatic cultural change surrounds each of us, but without a cultural lens, it is easy to ignore. In the mid-90s many people who made their living studying or caring for children had not recognized this phenomenon. However, the middle of the first decade of the twenty-first century, more and more people had begun to understand this historic change, and other child professionals remained oblivious to these social and cultural alterations. Now, in the second decade of the twenty-first century, the notions of childhood and youth are more complex, more pathologized, and more alien to adults who educate and parent.

In the domains of psychology, education, and to a lesser degree sociology, few observers have seriously studied the ways that the information explosion so characteristic of our contemporary era has operated to undermine traditional notions of childhood. Those who have shaped, directed, and used contemporary information technology have played an exaggerated role in the reformulation of childhood. *Kinderculture* analyzes these changes in childhood, including the role that information technology

and media has played in this process. To say that technology and media had created an entirely new childhood would be simplistic; numerous social, political, and economic factors have operated to produce such changes. My focus here is not to cover all issues but to question the ways media, in particular, have helped construct what I will continue to call *the new childhood*. Childhood is a social and historical artifact-not simply a biological entity. Many argue that childhood is a natural phase of growing up, of becoming an adult. The cardinal concept here involves the format of this human phase that has been produced by social, cultural, political, and economic forces operating upon it.

Childhood is a creation of society that is subject to change whenever major social transformations take place. What is labeled as "traditional childhood" is only about 150 years old. The concept of *children* as a particular classification of human beings demanding special treatment differing from adults had not yet developed as a social construct until the twentieth century. From the 1600s, children were considered mini-adults, a chronological definition, which didn't define their social or labor status. In the Middle Ages, for example, children participated daily in the adult world, gaining knowledge of vocational and life skills, working as young as 7 or 8. The zenith of the traditional childhood lasted from about 1850 to 1950. Protected from the dangers of the adult world, many children (up until the twentieth century, boys) during this period were removed from factories and placed into schools.

As the prototype of the modern family developed in the late nineteenth century, "proper" parental behavior toward children coalesced around notions of tenderness and adult account ability for children's welfare. By 1900 many believed that childhood was a birthright-a perspective that eventuated in a biological, not a cultural, definition of childhood. Emerging in this era of the protected child, modern child psychology was inadvertently constructed by the tacit assumptions of the period. The great child psychologists, from Erik Erikson to Arnold Gesell to Jean Piaget, viewed child development as shaped by biological forces.

Piaget's brilliance was constrained by his non-historical, socially decontextualized scientific approach. What he observed as the genetic expression of child behavior in the early twentieth century he generalized to all cultures and historical eras-an error that holds serious consequences for

those concerned with children. Considering biological stages of child development fixed and unchangeable, teachers, psychologists, parents, welfare workers, and the community at large view and judge children along a fictional taxonomy of development. Those children who didn't measure up would be relegated to low and self-fulfilling expectations. Those who made the grade would find that their racial and economic privilege are confused with ability (Polakow, 1992; Postman, 1994). *Kinderculture* joins the emerging body of literature that questions the biological assumptions of "classical" child psychology (Kincheloe, 2002).

Living in a historical period of great change and social upheaval, critical observers are just beginning to notice changing social and cultural conditions in relation to this view of childhood. Categories of child development appropriated from modernist psychology may hold little relevance for raising and educating contemporary children. In the 1950s, 80 percent of all children lived in homes where their two biological parents were married to each other (Lipsky & Abrams, 1994). No one has to be told that the family unit has changed in the past sixty years. Volumes have been written specifying the scope and causes of the social transformation.

Before the 1980s ended, children who lived with their two biological parents had fallen to merely 12%. Children of divorced parents (a group made up of more than half of the North American population) are almost three times as likely as children raised in two-parent homes to suffer emotional and behavioral difficulties...maybe more the result of parental conflict than the actual divorce (Mason & Steadman, 1997). Despite such understandings, social institutions have been slow to recognize different, nontraditional family configurations and the special needs they encounter. Without support, the contemporary "postmodern" family, with its plethora of working and single mothers and deadbeat dads, is beset with problems emanating from the feminization of poverty and the vulnerable position of women in both the public and private spaces (Polakow, 1992).

Positivist Notions of Children

It is important to place *Kinderculture* in paradigmatic context, to understand what I am discussing in relation to other scholarship on childhood studies and childhood education. *Kinderculture* directly challenges the positivist

view of children promoted in mainstream articulations of psychology, sociology, education, and anthropology. Positivism is an epistemological position maintaining that all knowledge of worth is produced by the traditional scientific method. All scientific knowledge constructed in this context is thus proclaimed neutral and objective. Critics of positivism (see [Kincheloe, 2002, 2003, 2004](#)) argue that because of the narrow nature of what positivist research studies (what it *can* study given its rules of analysis), it often overlooks powerful normative and ideological assumptions built into its research design. In this naïve context positivists often seek empirical proof of what are normative and/or political assertions that *adults always know better* when it comes to issues involving children.

A key goal of critics of positivism involves bringing these normative and ideological assumptions to the surface so observers can gain a much more textured perspective of what research involves and indicates. Indeed, critics of positivism insist that one dimension of research involves the researcher's analysis of his or her own assumptions, ideologies, and values, and how they shape the knowledge produced. In such a spirit, I openly admit my anti-positivist, hermeneutic epistemological orientations. Concurrently, I admit my critical democratic values, my vision of race, class, gender, and sexual equality, and the necessity of exposing the effects of power in shaping individual identity and political/educational purpose. This is not an act of politicization of research; research has always been politicized. Instead, I am attempting to understand and act ethically in light of such politicization.

In the positivist perspective, children are assumed to be subservient and dependent on adults as part of the order of the cosmos. In this context, adults are seen as having a "natural" prerogative to hold power over children. Positivists turn to biology to justify such assumptions, contending that the physical immaturity of children is manifested in other domains as inferiority, an absence of development, incompleteness, and weakness. One does not have to probe deeply into these biological assumptions to discern similarities between the positivist hierarchy of adults and children and the one subordinating *emotional* women to *rational* men. In my challenge to the positivist view of children, I focus on age and generation to depict children as different from adults but not inferior to them. Children are not merely entities on their way to adulthood; they are individuals intrinsically valuable for who they presently are. When positivists view children as lesser than

adults, they consistently ignore the way power operates to oppress children around the axes of race, class, gender, sexuality, ability, etc. The positivist construction of the "vulnerable" child in this context actually becomes more vulnerable as real and specific threats are overlooked because childhood is viewed as a naturally vulnerable state. The threats of different social, economic, political, and cultural "childhoods" are erased (Mason & Steadman, 1997).

The positivist view of childhood has been firmly grounded on developmental psychology's universal rules of child development. Regardless of historical or social context, these rules lay out the proper development of *normal* children. This mythos of the universal innocent and developing child transforms cultural dimensions of childhood into something produced by nature. By the second decade of the twentieth century, this universal norm for the developing child had been established on the basis of scientific authority, drawn almost exclusively from North American white, middle-class norms and experiences. Schools fell into line, developing a white, middle-class, patriarchal curriculum that reflected the norms of proper development. Reformers, blessed with the imprimatur of science, based their efforts to regulate play on the principles of developmental psychology. Advocates of municipal playgrounds, the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts worked to make sure that children made *appropriate* use of leisure time (Spigel, 1998).

The decontextualized aspect of the positivist view of childhood shapes numerous problems for those who don't fit into the dominant cultural bases of the proper development of normal children. In failing to understand the impact of race, class, gender, linguistics, national origin, etc., positivism fails to understand the nature of, and the reasons for differences between children. Positivism is often drawn by the obsession with standards, standardization, and testing... wherein differences are viewed as deficiencies. In this positivist regime, children from lower socioeconomic, nonwhite, or immigrant backgrounds are relegated to the lower rungs of the developmental ladder. The idea that life experiences and contextual factors might affect development is not considered in the positivist paradigm because it does not account for such social and cultural dynamics (Mason & Steadman, 1997).

As positivism came to delineate the scientific dimensions of child

development, male psychologists replaced mothers as child-rearing experts. In the early part of the twentieth century, the psychologist took on a socially important role. Many people believed that if scientific principles were not followed, innocent, malleable children would be led en masse into immorality and weakness. A significant feature of these scientific principles involved exposing children only to developmentally appropriate adult knowledge. The secret knowledge of adulthood, the positivist psychologists believed, should only be delivered to children at appropriate times in their development. One can understand the impact TV made on nations that bought into major dimensions of the positivist mythos. TV became a window to adult knowledge that could undermine the nation's strength and moral fiber. The positivist view of childhood could be maintained only through constant social regulation and surveillance of the young. Since childhood is vulnerable and socially unstable, the control of knowledge becomes especially important in the maintenance of its innocent format. In positivism, childhood no longer exists if the young gain access to certain forms of adult knowledge. No wonder the last half of the twentieth century witnessed so many claims that after TV and other electronic media, childhood was dead. The positivist position has been deemed by many as an elitist perspective, as adults are deemed the guardians under the bridge of childhood. Adults decide what children should know and how they should be socialized. The idea that children should be participants in making decisions about their own lives is irrelevant. In the positivist paradigm children are passive entities who must be made to submit to adult decisions about their lives (Spigel, 1998).

Naming a New Paradigm for Childhood

With the advent of a plethora of socioeconomic changes, technological developments, globalization, and the perceived inadequacy of the old paradigm, Western societies and increasingly other parts of the world have entered into a transitional phase of childhood. This transitional phase has been accompanied by a paradigm shift in the study of childhood, and situate it within social, cultural, political, and economic relations. This scholarly shift takes direct exception to the positivist view of childhood and its

expression of a universal, uniformly developmentalist conception of the normal child. This conception of the child as a passive receiver of adult input and socialization strategies has been replaced by a view of the child as an active agent capable of contributing to the construction of his or her own subjectivity. For those operating in the parameters of the new paradigm, the purpose of studying and working with children is not to break the borders between childhood and adulthood but to gain a thicker, more compelling picture of the complexity of the culture, politics, and psychology of childhood.

With its penchant for decontextualization and inability to account for contemporary social, cultural, political, economic, and epistemological changes, the positivist paradigm is not adequate for this task (Cannella, 1997; Hengst, 2001; Cannella & Kincheloe, 2002; Cannella, 2002; Cook, 2004; Hammer & Kellner, 2009; Steinberg, 2010, 2011). Insisting that children existed outside society and could be brought in from the cold only by adult socialization that led to development, the positivist view constructed research and childhood professional practices that routinely excluded children's voices. Advocates of this new paradigm have maintained time and again that such positivist silencing and general disempowerment is not in the best interests of children. In the name of child protection, advocates have argued, children are often rendered powerless and vulnerable in their everyday lives. As they construct their view of children as active constructors of their own worlds, proponents of the new paradigm work hard to emphasize the personhood of children. The children of the new paradigm both construct their worlds and are constructed by them. In ethnographic and other forms of new paradigm childhood study, children, like adults, are positioned as co-participants in research-not as mere objects to be observed and categorized. Advocates of the new paradigm operating in the domain of social and educational policy-making contend such activity must take into account the perspectives of children to inform their understanding of particular situations (Mason & Steadman, 1997; Cook, 2004; Steinberg, 2010b). Central to the new paradigm is the effort to make sure children are *intimately involved* in shaping their social, psychological, and educational lives. Unfortunately, child-empowerment advocacy is represented by media and psychologists as a permissive relinquishment of adult power over impudent and disrespectful children

(Mason & Steadman, 1997; Ottosen, 2003).

Undoubtedly, it will be a difficult struggle to reposition the child in twenty-first-century social relationships. In this context, Henry Jenkins (2002) argues, as an advocate of the new paradigm, that his work seeks to provide children with tools that facilitate children's efforts to achieve their own political goals and help them construct their own culture. In rejecting the positivist paradigm of childhood passivity and innocence.

I am not contending that there is no time when children need adult protection—that would be a silly assertion. Children, like human beings in general, often find themselves victimized by abuse, neglect, racism, class bias, and sexism. The salient point is that instead of further infantilizing children and rendering them more passive, critical scholars try to employ their perspectives in solving their problems (Mason & Steadman, 1997). Transformative researchers and child professionals, work to help children develop a critical political consciousness as they protect their access to diverse knowledge and technologies. Using a critical lens, I argue that children in social, cultural, psychological, and pedagogical contexts need help in developing the ability to analyze, critique, and improve their position in the world...to employ an understanding of kinderculture.

It is also essential to involve the explicit rejection of positivism's universalist conception of childhood and child development. When we enter diverse class and racial/ethnic cultures, we find childhoods that look quite different from the white, middle- and upper-middle-class, English-speaking one presented by positivism. In these particularistic childhoods researchers find great complexity and diversity within these categories. The social, cultural, and political structures that shape these childhoods and the children who inhabit them are engaged in profoundly different ways, depending on specific circumstances. Such structures never determine *who* children are, no matter how much consistency in macrostructures may exist. The particular and the general, the micro and the macro, agency and structure always interact in unpredictable ways to shape the everyday life of children. A central theme of the new paradigm reemerges: *children shape and are shaped by the world around them.*

Kinderculture maintains that the delicate and complex balance between these constructive forces must be carefully studied and maintained. If we move too far in our emphasis of structure over agency, we lapse into a

structural determinism that undermines the prerogative of individuals-thus, there is nothing a child can do to escape the ravages of poverty. If we move too far in our emphasis of agency, we often lose sight of how dominant power operates to undermine children's role in shaping their own lives and constructing their own subjectivities. The overemphasis of particularism and agency will often obscure just how powerless children can be. To develop our thicker and more complex view of childhood, we must constantly work to integrate the micro and the macro, to discern new cultural and political economic contexts in which to view and make sense of child behavior (Garey & Arendell, 1999; Ottosen, 2003). In this context, new paradigmatic researchers must not only nurture these macro (social, political economic), meso (institutional, e.g., school, media, religious institution, welfare agency), and micro (individuals) interactions, but attend to the ways such levels connect to one another.

Some scholars of childhood make distinctions between proponents of the new paradigm who emphasize structural issues and those who stress the agency of individual children. In this dichotomy scholars who emphasize the importance of commercial relations and corporate marketing in shaping children's culture have been relegated to the "structuralist" camp. Structuralists are represented in this configuration as emphasizing the corporate invasion of childhood and its resulting exploitation. Structuralists are said to view such exploitation as similar in nature to the exploitation of women. The agential perspective often focuses not on the exploitative but the *empowering* dimensions of children's participation in commercial culture.

By arguing that children construct their own lives, such agential scholars maintain that children are capable of avoiding the manipulations of corporate advertising and making positive use of the consumptive act and consumer products. Illustrating the divergence of the agential and structuralist positions, those labeled structuralists contend that while such creative appropriation certainly does take place, it often does nothing to subvert the ideological meanings inscribed on corporate constructions. When children appropriate toys and media productions, they often make meanings that subvert ideological inscriptions, while at other times their appropriations operate to validate the status quo. Such appropriations are complex and must be studied on a case-by-case basis. Kinderculture is

dedicated to the notion that often the separation of structural and agential interpretations creates a false binarism. Indeed, in every situation we study (see Joe Kincheloe's *Sign of the Burger: McDonald's and the Culture of Power* for an expansion of these ideas) we discern both structural and agential dimensions at work. A child, like an adult, can concurrently be exploited and possess agency. Whenever individuals deal with hegemonic and ideological productions, they deal with these competing dynamics (Mason & Steadman, 1997; Ottosen, 2003; Cook, 2004).

As in any sociopolitical situation with the potential for hegemonic and ideological exploitation, one can learn to be more sensitive to the ways exploitation takes place while developing strategies for avoiding it. And, as in any pedagogical situation, we can develop these strategies on their own or, in a Vygotskian sense, in cooperation with teachers who provide a new zone of proximal development that allows for a deeper understanding of the way power operates. This, of course, is the basis of critical media literacy of kinderculture (Steinberg, 2007).

David Buckingham (2003) dismisses the value of structuralist concerns with exploitation and argues that pedagogies of empowerment such as an understanding of kinderculture, have "increasingly been seen to amount to little more than rhetoric." By denying the possibility of a media literacy of power, Buckingham lapses into a pedagogy of nihilism that provides need for scholarly activity in the area of children's culture. Power and exploitation are erased in Buckingham's articulation, as is any effort to alert children to the ways the social, cultural, political, and economic domains operate to harm both them and other individuals is represented as a misguided form of "salvationism." Buckingham equates this so-called salvationism with right-wing attempts to protect childhood innocence via forms of censorship and moralistic regulation.

Most discussions between the agential and structuralist positions in the new paradigm of child studies should be this contentious. It is important to specify kinderculture's location in this conceptual matrix. The notion of kinderculture represents the critical theoretical new paradigm in childhood studies and childhood education. Criticality indicates a concern with power structures and their influence in everyday life. In the case of contemporary children, the sociopolitical and economic structures shaped by corporate power buoyed by the logic of capital as well as patriarchal structures, with

their oppressive positioning of women and children, are central concerns of the critical paradigm (Garey & Arendell, 1999; Scott, 2002). Using the production of pleasure as its ultimate weapon, 'the corporate children's consumer culture labeled kinderculture commodifies cultural objects and turns them into things to purchase rather than objects to contemplate. Kinderculture is subversive but challenges authority in its effort to maintain, rather than transform the status quo. It appeals to the agential child and agential child advocates as it offers children identities that Jane Kenway and Elizabeth Bullen (2001) label as autonomous, rational, and hedonistic.

Kinderculture is produced by aggressive marketers who possess profound insights into the lives, desires, and cultural context of contemporary children. Such marketers know how to cultivate intense affect among children and use such emotion to elicit particular consumptive and, in turn, ideological reactions. A key dimension of this consumptive-ideological dimension of kinderculture involves the marketers' understanding that children, particularly middle-class children, are especially interested in TV; movies, Internet, toys, and even foods (Kincheloe, 2002) that transgress parental norms of "good taste," social status, and educational development. This ideology of opposition is central in many cases to what separates contemporary children from their parents and other adults. Such oppositionality operates to subvert the bourgeois educational project of modernity-rational child development based on the achievement of universal stages of reason reflecting adult behavior and ways of being. As it commodifies and lures children into this oppositional conspiracy, it meshes consumption, education, information, knowledge, cultural capital, emotional bonding, entertainment, and advertising (Kenway & Bullen, 2001; Hengst, 2001; Steinberg, 2007). As an advocate of the critical new paradigm of childhood studies, I argue that kinderculture can no longer be ignored in the effort to understand the social, psychological, and educational dimensions of children. Corporate children's culture has replaced schooling as the producer of the central curriculum of childhood.

Is Childhood in Crisis?

Changing economic realities coupled with children's access to information

about the adult world have drastically changed childhood. Recent writing about childhood in both the popular and scholarly presses speaks of the lost childhood, children growing up too fast, and fragmented homes. Images of mothers killing children, babysitters torturing infants, kids pushing kids out of fourteen-story windows, and trick-or-treat razor blades in apples saturate the contemporary conversation about children. Popular culture/kinderculture provides haunting images of this crisis of childhood that terrify and engage our worst fears. The film *Halloween*, for example, is at one level a story of the postmodern childhood- fear in isolation. The isolation referenced here involves separation from both absent parents and a nonexistent community. No one is there to help; on the once-festive Halloween night, children are not present.

Even in "safe" suburbia, the community has fragmented to the point that the safety of children trick-or-treating cannot be guaranteed (Ferguson, 1994). The crisis of contemporary childhood can be signified in many ways, all of which involve at some level the horror of danger faced in solitude.

This crisis of childhood is part imagination, part reality. While children are vulnerable to social ills and the manipulations of unscrupulous adults and power wielders, there is a degree of moral panic and general hyperbole in the view that children are facing threats from predators unlike anything they have experienced in the historical past. While certainly not dismissing everyday threats to childhood in the twenty-first century, we should be careful not to let hysterics from diverse ideological perspectives paint a fear-driven portrait of the social landscape. A balanced view would demand that we position the crisis of childhood within the twenty-first-century social, cultural, and economic context. There is no doubt that childhood in Western societies is affected by the decline of industrialized economic arrangements.

In such industrialized societies labor was the most important social force for social integration. In a post-industrial condition people make life meanings outside the boundaries of their work lives. The labor process in this new context plays less and less of a role in shaping identity and constructing life experiences. As industrial jobs that lasted a lifetime with pensions and social benefits decline, more women have entered the workforce. More mothers have sought work outside the home, subsequently placing more pressure on their partners or babysitters to participate in child-rearing activities. In such contexts children learn to cope with busy and often

preoccupied parents. Consequently, they become more self-reliant than children from previous generations earlier in the twentieth century.

The changing role of women profoundly changes the role of children in contemporary Western societies. Even though women work outside the home, this does not lead to an equal sharing of domestic work: women work both in the home and out of the home (du Bois-Reymond, Suenker & Kruger, 2001). Increasing numbers of single poor women combine both paid labor and childcare without the help of a partner and with little or no assistance from the state. Without economic or social support, women and children in these categories have experienced increasingly harsh conditions and no hope for upward mobility. For middle- and upper-middle-class children, these social, economic, and cultural trends have sometimes provided them more independence and influence in the family. In lower socioeconomic circumstances, the trends exacerbate the effects of poverty and some times lead to more neglect and alienation.

In many middle- and lower-class homes, these larger socioeconomic trends operate to make children *more useful* than they had been throughout much of the twentieth century. As women become embedded in the workplace, traditional role expectations continue to erode. In order to adjust to these modified familial relationships, children and youth have taken on more responsibilities for caring not just for themselves but for their parents as well. Studies (Hengst, 2001) illustrate that children buy the food family food. Indeed, the home appliance industry, understanding this trend, is directing more and more of its advertising budget toward children and youth magazines. Industry demographics tell them that a growing segment of those who buy food, microwaves, and other kitchen appliances are youth (du Bois-Reymond, Suenker & Kruger, 2001). This represents a profound change in the way children are positioned in the social order and it holds dramatic implications for the education of children. As age boundaries blur, age becomes less important in shaping human abilities and role expectations, the crisis of childhood becomes the crisis of education. Children emerging in the new social conditions no longer reflect the expectations for childhood embedded in the structures and organization of schools. *New children* who experience more adult-like roles in other phases of their lives may not react positively to being treated like "children" in the classroom. Teachers voice complaints about children who talk like adults and have little or no respect

for their demands. What teachers sometimes perceive as impudence and a lack of respect is often a reflection of independent, self-sufficient children reacting to forms of regulation that they experience in no other aspect of their lives. This redirection of anger with adults is found in many media representations of children and youth. A savvy kid is often in complete control of not only her or his own destiny but that of a family or possibly the school or entire community. The knowing *kindercultured* kid of the new millennium balances complexity as the naive being promoted by caregivers and teachers, and as the in-control leader of the tacit life of a kid in today's society.

In this changing social context many scholars (Hengst, 2001) are making the argument that children are far more cognitively capable than traditionally maintained by developmental psychology. The world of technology and media, along with these changing notions of the social role of the child, has expanded what Lev Vygotsky referred to as the ZPD (zone of proximal development: the context that facilitates the learning process- of contemporary children). In the ZPD, individuals learn to take part in social and cultural activities that catalyze their intellectual development. In the media-created electronic ZPD, with its social media, TV; computers, video games, Internet, popular music, and virtual realities, children learn to use the tools of culture, (language, mathematics, reasoning, etc.) effortlessly.

When sociologists, psychologists, and cultural scholars examine what children and youth are able to construct employing the symbols and tools of mediated culture, it is clear how sophisticated and intellectually advanced children's abilities can become in this new ZPD. Kinderculture has quickly become a new culture of childhood learning. The space within which many contemporary children play is the same domain in which their parents work. Children access national and international information networks using the same tools as their parents. In this domain of learning, many children free themselves from the educational project of modern Western societies; they are not learning by preplanned program lesson plans taught by deskilled teachers.

Childhood is perceived in crisis because it resembles no thing most people have ever seen before. The corporate production of popular kinderculture and its impact on children is serious. The discussion falls under cultural pedagogy, which refers to the idea that education takes place

in a variety of social sites including but not limited to schooling. Pedagogical sites are those places where power is organized and deployed including music, social networking, TV; movies, newspapers, magazines, toys, advertisements, video games, comics, sports, etc. This work demands that we examine both school and cultural pedagogy if we are to make sense of the educational process (Giroux, 1994). Operating on the assumption that profound learning changes one's identity, we see the pedagogical process as one that engages our desire, captures our imagination, and constructs our consciousness. The emergence of cultural studies (Grossberg, 1995) has facilitated our effort to examine the cultural practices through which individuals come to understand themselves and the world that surrounds them (Steinberg, 2007). Supported by the insights of cultural studies, we are better equipped to examine the effects of cultural pedagogy, with its identity formation and its production and legitimation of knowledge: the cultural curriculum (Kasturi, 2002).

The organizations that create this cultural curriculum are not educational agencies but rather commercial concerns that operate not for the social good but for individual gain. Cultural pedagogy is structured by commercial dynamics, forces that impose themselves into all aspects of our own and our children's private lives (Giroux, 1994). Patterns of consumption shaped by corporate advertising empower commercial institutions as the teachers of the contemporary era. Corporate cultural pedagogy has produced educational forms that are wildly successful when judged on the basis of their capitalist intent. Replacing traditional classroom lectures and seatwork with magic kingdoms, animated fantasies, interactive video games, virtual realities, kickboxing TV heroes, action figures (complete with their own recorded "history"), and an entire array of entertainment forms produced ostensibly for adults but eagerly consumed by children, corporate America has helped revolutionize childhood. Using fantasy and desire, corporate functionaries have created a perspective on the world that melds with business ideologies and free-market values. The worldviews produced by corporate advertisers to some degree always let children know that the most exciting things life can provide are produced by their friends in corporate America.

We have become seasoned in the corporate interventions by brands like Pizza Hut (reading program), McDonald's (A students), and Nike (most school sports teams). It is also a time when publishing companies create

curriculum for students, with little or no educational or academic input. New curricula is a reflection of the agenda created By McGraw-Hill in the 1990s. Pearson Publishing retained to redesign the New York State primary curriculum in the early 2002, without one academic or schoolteacher on the design team. In less than a decade, Person now has complete economic access to the Common Core through texts and tests created to meet the Pearson curriculum. Up until this point, Disney has always had a hegemonic hold on children's culture through the participation of both families and teachers. It has never been unusual to walk into a primary school, really anywhere in the world, and spy bulletin boards, reading charts, and classroom assignment ledgers thematically displayed by Mickey, Donald, or a princess. In schools that claim a diverse and multicultural view, one will see representations of *Mulan*, *Pocahontas*, and *Aladdin* proclaiming that "It's a small world after all." Disney has recently taken the grandiose step of creating *Disney English Schools*. Disney claims an expertise in English, as it has been writing children's books for more than three-quarters of a century. These "qualifications" opened a market in Asia for English-language teaching. Disney English is a billion-dollar enterprise that has blurred the boundaries of education and corporate book-making.

One of the most profound events of the last century in world history in general and certainly in the history of childhood involves the successful commodification of childhood. Not only did corporate marketers open a new market but they helped generate a body of meanings, cultural practices, and ideological understandings that continues to shape our world and children around the planet (Cook, 2004). By gaining access to children, advertisers found out early in the twentieth century not only that they could induce children to buy more but that they could get children to nag their parents to consume more (Spigel, 1998). Though many argue to the contrary, it seems increasingly obvious that a large percentage of children and young people in the twenty-first century are enthusiastic participants in consumer society. In recent polls they express the belief that having more money would most improve their lives. Concurrently, they express great faith in the American economic system. Increasing numbers of children and young people own more than one credit card, and many own stocks. It is not uncommon for a ten year old to find a pre-paid Visa or Master Card in a gift card.

Corporate power wielders have worked hard to win such perspectives

and orientations among the young. Indeed consumer capitalism has succeeded in ways unimagined by previous advocates, as more and more children and young people come to hold the values and ideological dispositions that serve the best interests of corporate leaders (Spigel, 1998; Allen, 2003). In an interesting and insidious way, the marketers and children enter into an unspoken alliance that helps children escape both the control and the educational-developmental agenda of middle- and upper-middle-class parents. Social media and technology help create a personal, secluded domain for children free from direct parental regulation. Of course, many parents find such independence frightening, and many understandably worry about children becoming targets for advertising and marketing. While many concerned individuals have expressed anxiety over what they thought was corporate advertising's violation of the social contract protecting the sanctity of childhood, others such as David Buckingham have argued that such fears are overblown. Children, Buckingham maintains, possess the ability to discern advertising strategies early in their lives and can thus protect themselves from corporate exploitation. Moreover, Buckingham posits, there is no evidence that indicates that advertising makes children more materialistic than they would have been otherwise. In an empirical research context Buckingham's assertion is a safe one. Since no one knows how children would have been otherwise, it is empirically impossible to prove such an assertion either true or false. I could not disagree more.

The arguments I make for kinderculture maintain that it is our parental, civic, and professional responsibility to study the corporate curriculum and its social and political effects. Indeed, we maintain that as parents, citizens, and teachers we must hold corporations accountable for the pedagogical features of their activities, for the kinderculture they produce. We must intervene in the cozy relationship between popular culture and pedagogy that shapes our identities. In the interest of both our children and the larger society, we must exercise our personal and collective power to transform the variety of ways corporate power (gained via its access to media) oppresses and dominates us. We must cultivate an awareness of the ways cultural pedagogy operates so that we can scold when appropriate and rewrite popular texts when the opportunity presents itself. Kinderculture is primarily a pedagogy of pleasure, and as such it cannot be countered merely by ostracizing ourselves and our children from it. Strategies of resistance must

be formulated that understand the relationship between pedagogy, knowledge production, identity formation, and desire. In this article, I attempt to open a public conversation about the effect of kinderculture as the central curriculum of contemporary childhood.

Culturally Studying Kinderculture

Questions concerning kinderculture and its relationship to cultural pedagogy can be clarified and discussed within the academic field of cultural studies. Kinderculture resides at the intersection of educational childhood studies and cultural studies. Attempts to define cultural studies are delicate operations in that the field has consciously operated in a manner that avoids traditional academic disciplinary definitions. Nevertheless, cultural studies has something to do with the effort to produce an interdisciplinary (or counterdisciplinary) way of studying, interpreting, and often evaluating cultural practices in historical, social, and theoretical contexts. Refusing to equate "culture" with high culture, cultural studies attempts to examine the diversity of a society's artistic, institutional, and communicative expressions and practices. Because it examines cultural expressions ignored by the traditional social sciences, cultural studies is often equated with the study of popular culture. Such an equation is misleading; while popular culture is addressed by cultural studies, it is not the exclusive concern. Indeed, the interests of cultural studies are much broader, including the "rules" of academic study itself: the discursive practices (tacit regulations that define what can and cannot be said, who speaks and who must listen, and whose constructions of reality are valid and whose are unlearned and unimportant) that guide scholarly endeavor.

Thus, cultural studies holds exciting possibilities for new ways of studying Education: specifically childhood education, with its attention to the discursive dynamics of the field. How do children embody kinderculture? How do the power dynamics embedded in kinderculture produce pleasure and pain in the daily lives of children? How do critically grounded parents, teachers, child psychologists, and childhood professionals in general gain a view of children that accounts for the effects of popular culture in their self-images and worldviews? Such questions open new

domains of analysis in childhood studies, as they seek out previously marginalized voices and the vantage points they bring to both the scholarly and practitioner-based conversation (Grossberg, 1995; Nelson, Treichler, & Grossberg, 1992). While we are enthused by the benefits of cultural studies of childhood, we are simultaneously critical of expressions of elitism within the discourse of cultural studies itself—a recognition made more disturbing by cultural studies' claim to the moral high ground of a politics of inclusivity. Unfortunately, the study of children has traditionally been regarded as a low-status exercise in the culture of academia. The field of cultural studies has reproduced this power/status dynamic in its neglect of childhood study. Indeed, few students of cultural studies have targeted children as the subjects of their scholarship. *Kinderculture* attempts to address this absence and promote new literature and research focus.

Popular Culture as a Serious Discipline

The study of traditional forms of kinderculture, for instance fairy tales, has granted scholars insights into hard-to-reach domains of child consciousness.

Moreover, the more disturbing and violent the fairy tale, some would argue, the more insight into the "primitive" feelings that arise and shape us in early childhood and, in turn, in adulthood. The connection between kinderculture and childhood desires and feelings blows the rational cultural fuse, thus connecting adults to childrens' *lebenswelt* and granting them better access to childhood perceptions. Not only does the study of children's popular culture grant insights into childhood consciousness; it also provides new pictures of culture in general. Kinderculture, in this context, inadvertently reveals at a very basic level what is disturbing us in our everyday lives, what irritants reside at the level of our individual and collective subconsciousness.

Exposing Power

My objective is to promote understandings of kinderculture that lead to smart and democratic pedagogies for childhood at the cultural, familial, and

school levels. Cultural studies connected to a democratic pedagogy for children involves investigations of how children's consciousness is produced around issues of cultural expectations for children, social justice, and egalitarian power relations. An analyses must focus on exposing the footprints of power left by the corporate producers of kinderculture and their effects on the psyches of our children. Appreciating the ambiguity and complexity of power, our democratic pedagogy for children is committed to challenging ideologically manipulative and racist, sexist, and class-biased entertainment for children. It is equally opposed to other manifestations of kinderculture that promote violence and social and psychological pathologies. Children's entertainment, like other social spheres, is a contested public space where different social, economic, and political interests compete for control.

Unfortunately, many are uncomfortable with overt discussions of power. Such unease allows power wielders to hide in the recesses of the cultural and political landscape all the while shaping cultural expression and public policy in their own interests-interests that may conflict with those of less powerful social groups such as children. We are not good students of power. All too often references to power are vague to the point of meaninglessness in the worst literature produced by critical scholars. For the purpose of clarification, when we refer to power-wielders, we are not merely referencing a social class or a category of human beings. Picking up on John Fiske's (1993) use of the term, *power bloc*, we are referring to particular social formations designated by race, class, gender, and ethnicity that hold special access to various resources (e.g., money, information, cultural capital, media, etc.) that can be used for economic or political gain. Power, as we use the term, involves a panoply of operations that work to maintain the status quo and keep it running with as little friction (social conflict) as possible.

It is beneficial to those individuals and groups that profit most from existing power relations to protect them from pests like us. When studying this power bloc, we employ Fiske's notion that it can be better understood by "what it does than what it is" (p. 11). Our use of the concept of the power bloc in the production of kinderculture is-not meant to imply some conspiracy of diabolical corporate and political kingpins churning out material to harm our children. Rather, our notion of the power bloc revolves

around alliances of interests that may never involve individual relationships between representatives of the interests or organizations in question. Power bloc alliances, we believe, are often temporary, coming together around particular issues but falling apart when the issue is no longer pertinent. Those who perceive power to be a complex issue will encounter little disagreement from us. Power and power bloc alliances are nothing if not complex and ambiguous. But because of the power bloc's contradictions and ephemerality, it is never able to dominate in some incontestable manner. Along the lines of its contradictions may exist points of contestation that open possibilities of democratic change. Larry Grossberg (1995) contends that since power never gets all it wants, there are always opportunities to challenge its authority. In this context we begin our study of the corporate production of kinderculture, analyzing the ways power represses the production of democratic artifacts and produces pleasure for children. If power was always expressed by *just saying no* to children's desires, it would gain little authority in their eyes.

The power of Disney, Microsoft, Apple, Dreamworks, Pixar, and McDonald's is never greater than when it produces pleasure among consumers. Recent cultural studies of consumption link it to the identity formation of the consumer (Warde, 1994; Kincheloe, 2002), meaning that to some degree we are what we consume. Status in one's subculture, individual creations of style, knowledge of cultural texts, role in the community of consumers, emulation of fictional characters, internalization of values promoted by popular cultural expressions- all contribute to our personal identities. Popular culture provides children with intense emotional experiences often unmatched in any other phase of their lives. It is not surprising that such energy and intensity exert powerful influences on self-definition, on the ways children choose to organize their lives. Obviously, power mixed with desire produces an explosive cocktail; the colonization of desire, however, is not the end of the story. Power enfolds into consciousness and unconsciousness in a way that evokes desire, no doubt, but also guilt and anxiety. The intensity of the guilt and anxiety a child may experience as a result of her brush with power is inseparable from the cultural context in which she lives. Desire in many cases may take a back seat to the repression of desire in the construction of child consciousness/unconsciousness and the production of identity (Donald,

1993). The cocktail's effects may be longer-lasting than first assumed, as expression of the repression may reveal itself in bizarre and unpredictable ways. To make this observation about the relationship among power, desire, and the way that the repression of desire expresses itself at the psychological level is not to deny human agency (self-direction). While the power bloc has successfully commodified kinderculture, both adults and children can successfully deflect its repressive elements. The role of the critical childhood professional involves helping children develop what Fiske (1993) calls the affective moments of power evasion. Using their abilities to re-read Disney films along fault lines of gender or to re-encode Barbie and Ken in a satirical mode, children take their first steps toward self-assertion and power resistance. Such affective moments of power evasion certainly do not constitute the ultimate expression of resistance, but they do provide a space around which more significant forms of critical consciousness and civic action can be developed (Steinberg, 2007).

Critical Literacies

The information explosion-the media saturation of contemporary Western societies, with its access to private realms of human consciousness has created a social vertigo. This social condition, labeled by Baudrillard as hyperreality, exaggerates the importance of power wielders in all phases of human experience. Hyperreality's flood of signifiers in everything from megabytes to TV advertising diminishes our ability to either find meaning or engender passion for commitment. With so much power-generated information bombarding our senses, adults and children lose the faith that we can make sense of anything. Thus, the existence of hyperreality forces us to rethink our conversation about literacy. Children, who have been educated by popular culture, approach literacy from a very different angle. Media literacy becomes not some rarefied add-on to a traditional curriculum but a basic skill necessary to negotiating one's identity, values, and well-being in power-soaked hyperreality. In many schools such ideas have never been considered, not to mention seriously discussed. Media literacy, like power, is not viewed in mainstream circles as a topic for children (or even adults). The same educators who reject the study of media literacy or kinderculture are

the ones who have to cope with its effects.

As I contend in *Media Literacy: A Reader* (Steinberg, 2007), a critical understanding of media culture requires students not simply to develop the ability to interpret media meanings but to understand the ways they consume and affectively invest in media. Such an attempt encourages both critical thinking and self-analysis, as students begin to realize that everyday decisions are not necessarily made freely and rationally. Rather, they are encoded and inscribed by emotional and bodily commitments relating to the production of desire and mood, all of which leads, in Noam Chomsky's famous phrase, to the "manufacture of consent." These are complex pedagogical and ideological issues, and they demand rigorous skills of questioning, analyzing, interpreting, and meaning making. Contrary to the decontextualized pronouncements of developmental psychology, relatively young children are capable of engaging in these cognitive activities (Nations, 2001). Of course, in the contemporary right-wing, test-driven educational context, such abilities are not emphasized, as memorization for standards tests becomes more and more the order of the school day.

The political dimension of our critical pedagogy of childhood requires developing and teaching this media literacy. Such a literacy respects children's intellectual ability to deal with the complexities of power, oppression, and exploitation, as it refuses to position them as innocent, passive, and helpless victims. In an era when children can instantaneously access diverse types of information, they need the ability to traverse this knowledge terrain in savvy and well-informed ways. A critical pedagogy of childhood finds this approach much more helpful than pietistic right-wing efforts to censor potentially offensive data from innocent childhood eyes. In their effort to perpetuate the discourse of childhood innocence, right-wing child advocates maintain a positivist developmentalist view that media literacy is irrelevant because children do not have the intellectual and emotional maturity to understand TV advertising or subtle marketing appeals (Cassell & Jenkins, 2002). As much as the advocates of childhood innocence might wish for it, children in the twenty-first century are not going to return to the mythical secret garden of innocence. For better and worse children now live in a wider, information-saturated adult world. I believe that the best thing we can do in this circumstance is to prepare children to cope with it, make sense of it, and participate in it in ways that

benefit everyone.

Notes

Ideas expressed in this article originate from research stemming from all three editions of *Kinderculture: The Corporate Construction of Childhood*.

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O programa Mundu Novu e a brecha digital no Ensino Básico em Cabo Verde

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O programa Mundu Novu e a brecha digital no Ensino Básico em Cabo Verde

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Resumo

Durante a última década a presença de computadores em Cabo Verde tem aumentado consideravelmente, bem como as suas influências em sectores importante para o desenvolvimento do país. Há já algum tempo que conhecimentos académicos tradicionais não se fazem suficientes para garantir a produtividade se não forem, obrigatoriamente, complementados pelos domínios das Tecnologias de Informação e Comunicação. Este Trabalho de Investigação, estuda as condições e as contribuições do subsistema Ensino Básico na senda do desenvolvimento nacional, numa altura que as autoridades educativas nacionais iniciam uma reforma que visa mudar o paradigma educativo no país através do programa “Mundu Novu”. O trabalho apresenta uma análise descritiva relativa ao uso, a da TIC enquanto ferramentas de apoio à aprendizagem e como este programa contribui para reduzir a brecha digital, segundo a opinião de professores em ativo. Em termos metodológicos, foi necessário recorrer à metodologia qualitativa, através da aplicação de entrevista aos professores dos seis concelhos que compõe a Região Norte da Ilha de Santiago em Cabo Verde.

Palavras-chaves: TIC, políticas educativas, competência digital, brecha digital, formação de professores.

The Mundu Novu program and digital divide in Basic Education in Cape Verde

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Abstract

Last decade the number of computers in Cabo Verde increased notably, making influences on important sectors for the country development. For many years traditional knowledge are not being enough in order to guarantee the productivity unless it was complemented by ICT area of influence. In the survey the conditions and contributions of Compulsory Education subsystem to the national growth development are studied, meanwhile educational authorities have already started an education reform programmes, which aims to change the educational paradigm within the country by implementing "Mundu Novu" program. This work shows a descriptive analysis about the use of ICT as educational tools for support learning and its role to overcome the digital divide from teachers' opinions. In relation to the research method, a qualitative approach was used through interviews to teachers in service from the six areas belonging Northern Region at Santiago Island in Cabo Verde.

Keywords: ICT, educational policies, digital skills, digital divide, teachers training.

Dariamente assistimos o redesenhamento da sociedade em rede definida por Castells (2007). Na escola, os chamados “nativos digitais” (Prensky, 2001) navegam nos computadores pessoais e partilham ecrãs múltiplos, procurando novas formas de chegar ao conhecimento, desde o livro digital, conforme Guerreiro (2011), parece ainda não estar firmemente estabelecido, até os diapositivos móveis (Traxler, 2009).

A inclusão massiva das TIC nas escolas deixou de ser apenas um projeto de laboratórios de informática (Doval, 2011) passando a própria utilização das ela mesma a ser uma alternativa inteligente para fazer com que a educação se torne mais sensível aos sinais de mudança.

Daí que as tecnologias de informação e comunicação devem ser usadas em todos os níveis de educação, treinamento e desenvolvimento de recursos humanos (UNESCO, 2011) em todo mundo. Em Uruguai o Plano Ceibal busca promover a inclusão digital disponibilizando um computador portátil a cada aluno e a cada professor da educação primária; na Argentina o plano, *Conectar Igualdad*, tem como objetivo fornecer um computador portátil a todos dos estudantes e docentes das escolas secundárias, de educação especial e de formação docente (RELPE, 2011). No Brasil a ampla disseminação de tecnologias no contexto escolar nacional vem se materializando através de diversas ações baseadas em políticas nacionais desde o início dos anos 80, como uma estratégia para desenvolvimento das forças de produção e organizações políticas e sociais brasileiras, e portanto modernização da sociedade em um esforço para atingir o mesmo nível dos países que são tecnicamente e industrialmente mais desenvolvidos (Quartiero, Bonilla & Fantin, 2013). Na Espanha o modelo 1:1, impulsionou a chegada massiva de computadores e outros recursos tecnológicos aos alunos e professores, provocando inovação nas práticas, introduzindo novos métodos e estratégias de ensino e mudanças na forma de organizar os alunos assim como no tempo das classes (Area & Sabrina, 2013). Segundo Paredes (2012), *Escola 2.0¹* contempla o uso de um computador por aluno enquanto seu recurso tecnológico contínuo, para poder acompanhar as aulas digitais do sec XXI onde as escolas estariam dotadas de pizzarias digitais interativas, de infraestruturas tecnológicas e de conexão básica à internet. O segundo eixo importante deste programa seria ações de

formação destinadas aos professores tutores e aos responsáveis de tecnologias de cada centro em aspetos metodológicos e sociais da integração dos recursos educativos digitais nas suas práticas docentes, além de aspetos tecnológicos (De Pablos, 2013). Em Portugal, um país do qual Cabo Verde herdou muitos modelos educativos e não só, por sucessivos despachos e orientações governamentais, a incorporação das Tecnologias de Informação e Comunicação no sistema educação deu-se em três importantes etapas: a primeira foi marcada pelo projeto MINERVA, nos anos 80 que foi o início das TIC a nível nacional, segunda fase, marcada pelo programa *Nónio Século XXI*, nos anos 90, pretendia que as escolas apresentassem projetos de integração nas TIC, e a terceira marcada pelo programa *e-Escola* em 2007, que promovia a aquisição de computadores portáteis e acessos a redes sem fios a toda a comunidade educativa (Carvalho & Ribeiro, 2012).

Cabo Verde tem feito um progresso substancial no desenvolvimento das TIC demonstrando uma boa capacidade para implementar processos de modernização baseados em TIC, apostando na Governação Digital, informatizando os serviços da função pública. Simultaneamente, Cabo Verde está a apostar cada vez mais no desenvolvimento do sector económico das tecnologias, com vista tornar o investimento no ensino interativo 1:1 (um por um, ou seja um aluno um computador) um requisito estratégico de grande alcance. Designadamente, a promoção do uso das TIC no sistema educativo, desenvolvimento de ações de formação e de investigação dirigidas à diferentes segmentos da sociedade, promoção de acesso gratuito às TIC.

Apesar de se verificar uma melhoria continuada dos principais indicadores verifica-se ainda um caminho por percorrer face aos rácios necessários para Cabo Verde se posicionar como um país atrativo e competitivo em termos das qualificações dos seus recursos humanos. As principais dificuldades sanar estão relacionadas a²:

- Rácio de alunos por computador.
- Acesso à Internet nas escolas, a representatividade de escolas “online”.
- Baixa taxa de eletrificação das escolas do Ensino Básico (apresentando um valor de 45%).
- Deficiente capacitação dos professores para o uso das TIC em suas atividades profissionais.

Para debelar os problemas identificados além dos demais relacionados com o uso das TIC na Educação o governo de Cabo Verde Lançou em 2009 os programa “Mundu Novu”, que visa mudar o paradigma educativo nacional através do uso das TIC na educação.

Constituem finalidades deste artigo apresentar uma análise do uso das TIC no Ensino Básico, nível de formação dos professores e as percepções do professores relativamente ao programa “Mundu Novu” e avaliar o seu impacto no subsistema Ensino Básico em Cabo Verde e, especialmente, recolher as sua opiniões relativamente à forma como estas políticas de implementação das TIC no Ensino Básico podem para a redução da brecha digital.

As Políticas Educativas Para A Integração Curricular Das TIC Na Educação

A evolução tecnológica tem arrastado consigo algumas mudanças para a educação. O contexto educativo tem sido modificado, com o impacto das tecnologias, proporcionando novas formas de aprendizagens. Portanto, a integração das tecnologias nas escolas deve ser planeada, definindo de modo que o processo ensino-aprendizagem seja mais eficaz e eficiente. A UNESCO têm chamado a atenção para o impacto que as TIC podem ter na renovação do Sistema Educativo, bem como para a resposta que devem dar aos múltiplos desafios das sociedades da informação (Silva & Silva, 2002).

É importante realçar que a integração das TIC não surge de uma necessidade premente do professor, mas de uma quase imposição da sociedade digital, da qual os mais novos, os verdadeiros nativos digitais (Prensky, 2001) são os principais admiradores, ainda que hajam autores que os chamam especialistas de rotinas (Hernández, Yuste & Gutiérrez, 2012). Nesta ordem, a divulgação e utilização de Tecnologias de Informação e Comunicação nas escolas tem vindo ser visto pelos decisores políticos de educação como uma oportunidade significativa (Kozma, 2010), na perspetiva que as TIC podem melhorar o desempenho dos alunos e o acesso à educação, aumentar a eficiência e reduzir custos, melhorar a capacidade de aprender dos alunos e promover a sua aprendizagem ao longo da vida, assim como prepará-los enquanto forças

de trabalho num mundo globalizado e competitivo. A introdução das TIC podem portanto ter um impacto maior quando as políticas e programas destinados a implementá-las são feitas no contexto mais amplo da metas sociais e económicas, e quando são aplicadas para apoiar toda a transformação educacional (Lugo, Kelly & Shurman, 2012). Uma transformação que propicie uma adequada integração curricular das TIC na Educação passa pela formação inicial e permanente dos professores para o uso pedagógico das TIC a partir das universidades (Sancho, 2007; Gutiérrez, Palacios & Torrego, 2010), que inclui competências específicas e tarefas que incorpora as TIC em sua prática docente e liga explicitamente estas práticas com a visão global das políticas educativas estratégicas (Valverde, Garrido & Sosa, 2009) dotando os centros educativo de visão e competências para apoiar os respetivos docentes nas suas ações de utilização das TIC nas suas práticas pedagógicas. Nesta ordem de ideia, Silva (2008) afirma que o processo de integração das TIC na Escola só terá sucesso se for devidamente planeado, e levasse e em consideração três fatores decisivos como: a sua integração sistemática em projeto curricular; excelente articulação entre o conhecimento pedagógico disponível e o conhecimento do professor e finalmente a inserção das TIC na política de renovação da escola.

A fim de adaptar-se às exigência de implementação das TIC, a educação tem revisito os currículos escolares de todos os níveis de ensino, com o propósito de utilizá-las para a promoção da educação científica, levando-se em conta a necessidade de reavaliar e adaptar a prática pedagógica e as atividades discentes tendo em conta as especificidades locais e temporais, exigindo muito mais flexibilidade espaço-temporal, pessoal e de grupo, menos conteúdos fixos e processos mais abertos de pesquisas e de comunicação Moran (2009).

Assim, desde os anos 80 do século passado que se exploram as tecnologias no domínio pedagógico (Lima, 2006), o que tem conduzido a transformações significativas ao nível dos conteúdos, objetivos, métodos, técnicas e meios pedagógicos, ainda que a inclusão destes meios não tenham assegurado a inovação docente, conforme aponta Moran (2003).

A Formação De Professor Em TIC: Competência Digital

De acordo com as declarações de Costa ([2008, p.147](#)) a questão da utilização dos computadores na escola

... tem obrigatoriamente de ser associada à discussão sobre a qualidade da sua utilização, ou seja, o que se faz com os computadores, como se utilizam e para quê, em vez da insistência em torno das taxas de implantação e das rácio de alunos por computador, aspetos dominantes no discurso dos responsáveis e decisores políticos... apesar de serem fatores condicionantes do uso.

É necessário muito mais do que dispor de equipamentos tecnologicamente avançados ([Salomon, 2002](#); [Vrasidas & Glass, 2005](#)) preparar professores para fazerem face a esses desafios ([Thompson, 2005](#)) de além de ter que elaborar os seus próprios conteúdos educativos ter integrar as TIC nas aulas e adestrar o aluno no seu uso, transformando a aula em um recinto de inovação didática e tecnológica ([Mifsud, 2011](#)). Pois, o perfil atual do aluno exige do professor novas competências na sua relação pedagógica. O docente a enquadrar no novo currículo, adaptado às exigências de Integração das TIC deve ser capaz de transformar o aluno em um indivíduo construtor/gestor do seu próprio conhecimento, tornando-o ativo, colaborativo, e criativo ([Gutiérrez, Yuste, Delgado & Fustes, 2011](#)).

A UNESCO ([2011](#)) se vale de uma abordagem holística e abrangente para promover as TIC na educação, mediante fornecimento de informações aos desenvolvedores de políticas educativas, professores-educadores, fornecedores de cursos profissionalizantes e professores atuantes sobre o papel das TIC na reforma educativa, bem como ajuda aos países em todo o mundo a desenvolver padrões nacionais de competência em TIC para professores, com base na abordagem de Plano Diretor para a TIC na Educação, tendo em conta a alfabetização em tecnologia, o aprofundamento e a Criação de conhecimento.

Investigações, conforme [Bruillard e Baron \(2002\)](#) e [Barroqueiro e Amaral \(2011\)](#), apontam a formação de professores como sendo uma das componentes críticas para o sucesso da implementação dos computadores

nas escolas merecendo especial relevo precisamente a que é ministrada no início da carreira. É certo essa formação nunca seja suficiente ou responda cabalmente às complexidade profissionais futuras, daí a necessidade de permanentemente recorrer à formações contínuas (Schlünzen, 2012) para as devidas/necessárias reciclagens. Já que a “formação contínua não pode limitar-se à uma única dimensão pedagógica e apresentar-se descontextualizada, nem a formação inicial pode ser definida como anterior à ação do professor” (Melo Neto, 2007, p. 16), é necessário um plano de formação com flexibilidade necessária para ajustar às necessidades e intenções de cada professor e de cada escola onde aquele labora (Boavida, 2009).

A formação dos novos professores em relação ao uso das TIC deve contemplar aspetos que permitam-lhes adquirir a capacidade de usar TIC para a realização do seu trabalho pessoal e para a sua prática profissional, tanto na escola como na relação com a comunidade. Pois, a eles cabe o papel de minimizar o efeito da brecha digital, no sentido de reduzir a infoexclusão.

Conforme Castells (2002) no seio dos professores o fosso digital não existe tanto ao nível do acesso aos recursos TIC, mas ao nível da capacidade educativa e cultural de utilizar a Internet e outros recursos TIC, daí, a necessidade de uma forte aposta na formação docente voltado para o uso pedagógicos das TIC, assunto que o governo de cabo ver tem dado bastante atenção na sua agenda de medidas de políticas para a implementação da TIC na educação cabo-verdiana.

As Políticas De Implementação Das TIC Em Cabo Verde. O Programa Mundu Novu

O sistema educativo Cabo-verdiano é um universo constituído por escolas públicas e privadas, do nível pré-escolar ao superior, tendo como níveis intermediários o secundário nas vias geral e técnica, os médios e os profissionalizantes que conferem o grau superior ou não.

A formação de professores tem sido uma aposta permanente dos sucessivos governos de Cabo Verde, investindo em instituições para o efeito como o caso de ex-Instituto Pedagógico de Cabo Verde (IPCV) atua Instituto Universitário da Educação (IUE), que ministrava curso

médio de professores do ensino básico. Desde 1997 que o Instituto Pedagógico, inaugurou um Pólo Anexo de formação da escola de formação de professores da Praia em Assomada, a qualificação de professores do Ensino Básico da região norte da ilha de Santiago, passou a ser feita na própria Região, sob a responsabilidade da então Escola de Formação de Professores de Ensino Básico de Assomada (EFPEBA). A EFPEBA, em paralelo com o Centro de Ensino de Assomada (CEA), também, passou a formar educadores de infância. É de frisar que formação ministrada pelo CEA não confere o grau médio mas sim profissional de nível II.

Tal como existe um pouco por todo o país, encontramos professores com o grau de licenciatura a exercerem no Ensino Básico. Estes se licenciaram, em áreas da educação e/ou outras, através de instituições superiores e universidades do país, muitos deles depois de terem completado o curso médio para a docência ministrado pelo IPCV.

Para uma breve descrição da situação educativo do ensino básico na Região norte da ilha apresentamos alguns indicadores, como mostram as tabelas a seguir.

Tabela 1

Relação de Formado no âmbito do programa IntelREnsino

Concelho	Ano letivo 2009/10			Ano letivo 2012/13		
	Total/ concelho	Prof. s/ formação	% Prof s/ formação	Total/ concelho	Prof. s/formação	% Prof s/ formação
Santa Catarina	290	53	18,28	272	22	8,09
São S. do Mundo	71	11	15,49	65	1	1,54
Santa Cruz	134	24	17,91	193	9	4,66
S. L. Órgãos	63	8	12,7	62	2	3,23
S. Miguel	135	14	10,37	137	3	2,19

Tarrafal	137	13	9,49	133	5	3,76
Total Regional	830	123	14,18	862	42	4,87
Nacional	3009	301	10	2955	132	4,47

Fonte: MED -Anuário da Educação (2010 e 2013)

Curiosamente a maioria dos concelhos dessa região apresenta a percentagem de professores sem formação específica para a docência com valores superiores ao da média nacional tanto em 2009 quanto em 2013. Em Santa Catarina, concelho mais populoso e com maior extensão territorial, esse valor é quase duplica a média nacional. Apenas no concelho de Tarrafal encontramos percentagem inferior à média nacional.

Conforme nos dados do MED (2010, 2013) podemos constatar que no ano letivo mais de 25% das turmas nacionais estão situadas nessa região, sendo o número de turmas em Santa Catarina mais de dobro dos outros concelhos, exceto o concelho de Santa Cruz que possui 210 turmas em 2010 e 193 turmas em 2013, espalhadas por 24 escolas, com uma média de 8 a 9 turmas por escolas, superior a todos os outros concelhos. A nível regional o nº médio de turmas por escola é à volta de 6 a 7 turmas com uma média de 22 alunos por sala em 2009 e 20 em 2013. A área geográfica que constituiu a delimitação do nosso estudo possui uma grande quantidade de escolas situadas em locais de difícil acesso com condições educativas desfavoráveis, no contexto da sociedade de informação que hoje se vive.

O programa, “Mundo Novo”, criado pelo governo em 2009, que visa a introdução das TIC no sistema educativo cabo-verdiano, nomeadamente nas escolas públicas de ensino básico e secundário, tem como uma das suas metas reduzir as assimetrias sociais, garantindo o acesso aos novos meios de informação e comunicação com financiamento a alunos necessitados e programa de combate à iliteracia, através da inserção das escolas e das suas gentes na rede informática escolar e, procurar, desta forma, reduzir a brecha digital, como discriminação no uso das TIC como rotina nas atividades diárias (Serrano & Martinez, 2003), entre professores e alunos. Os Pilares deste Programa são:

- *Pilar I – Infraestrutura Tecnológica*, compreende dois eixos de atuação. Por um lado, o Eixo 1.1., Conectividade, que visa assegurar conectividade e acesso à Internet com a necessária largura de banda e por outro o Eixo 1.2, designado de Kit Tecnológico que deverá assegurar todos os apetrechos tecnológicos necessários para o ensino 1:1, nomeadamente, computador pessoal, quadro interativo ou projetor, periféricos e salas e escolas apetrechadas tecnologicamente.
- *Pilar II – Novo Modelo de Educação*, também compreende dois eixos de atuação. O Eixo 2.1. Conteúdos Modernos que visa assegurar: i) a introdução da disciplina TIC no ensino, ii) novos conteúdos curriculares e iii) a promoção das novas competências do século XXI. Por outro lado, o Eixo 2.2. Novos Métodos de Ensino, visa dotar o sistema educativo de formas mais eficazes de ensino e aprendizagem, possibilitadas pela utilização das tecnologias de informação e comunicação.
- *Pilar III – Capacitação dos Recursos*, irá requerer atuação também em duas frentes. O programa “Mundu Novu” define a formação de professores como central para a mudança de modelo de educação, devendo garantir que sejam capazes de se reposicionar no seu novo papel na sala de aula, conhecer as potencialidades do ensino através das TIC e formar os alunos nas novas competências para o Século XXI. Novos procedimentos de gestão escolar deverão também potenciar o sistema educativo.
- *Pilar IV – Coesão Social*, terá dois objetivos, o primeiro consubstanciado no Eixo 4.1 Redução da Infoexclusão, que tem por objetivo permitir o acesso de todos os alunos ao novo modelo de educação e o segundo no Eixo 4.2 Sociedade Civil, que visa o envolvimento da mesma.
- *Pilar V – Empreendedorismo*, tem por objetivo, por um lado, através do Eixo 5.1. Envolvimento do Tecido Empresarial, a criação de oportunidades de envolvimento das empresas locais e de novos empreendedores na construção e gestão do novo modelo de educação. Adicionalmente, o Eixo 5.2. visa o Envolvimento da Diáspora.

- Por último, o *Pilar VI – Sustentabilidade do Programa*, através dos Eixos 6.1 Governação, 6.2. Capacidade Operacional, 6.3. Financiamento, 6.4. Comunicação e 6.5. Monitorização.

Como forma de diminuir a brecha digital, enquadrado no seu plano operacional, o programa tem a responsabilidade de levar a cabo um conjunto de ações em prol da melhoria/modernização do processo ensino aprendizagem com base nas TIC, que passamos a referir, NOSI (2005, p. 60):

- Aumento e melhoria das condições de conectividade e massificação dos acessos e a utilização generalizada da Internet (...)
- Curso de Iniciação Programa IntelEnsino - formação e capacitação de professores, inserido no Eixo Formação dos Agentes de Educação, com vista preparar os professores para a introdução de novas técnicas pedagógicas como fator central para a mudança do modelo de ensino e sucesso do Programa. O quadro seguinte reporta os dados da formação “IntelEnsino” em 2013.

ESCOLAS	Prof. Formados por ano					Total
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	
Básicas	-	300	246	31	338	915
Secundárias	-	1138	729	54	713	2634
Formadores Intel	30	-	-	-	-	30
Inst. Pedagógico	-	-	14	-	-	14
Total	30	1438	989	85	1051	3593

Figure 1. Relação de Formado no âmbito do programa IntelREnsino. Fonte:

<http://www.mundunovu.gov.cv>

Pode-se atestar que o programa teve a preocupação de contemplar professores de todos os níveis de ensino, do básico ao superior, proporcionando maior harmonia entre os diferentes subsistemas, minimizando desta forma a brecha digital.

O plano de execução do “Mundu Novu”, no âmbito do seu projeto de redução da brecha digital, ainda, contempla:

- Programa de formação permanente de professores à distância
- Disponibilização de Kits Tecnológicos às 30 Escolas-Piloto, como forma de se introduzir e reforçar o uso de equipamentos tecnológicos nas salas de aula, com vista a permitir práticas pedagógicas mais inovadoras e interativas por parte de professores e alunos. Esse Kit Inclui: Computador portátil; Videoprojector; Tela de Projeção; Colunas de som. Em 2013 toda essas escolas já equipadas com um sala de informática devidamente apetrechada e reforçou-se o parque tecnológico de várias escolas que já tinham sido contempladas no PMN e foram equipadas – a nível de laboratórios de Informática - mais 14 novas escolas do Ensino Secundário, 44 novas escolas do Ensino Básico e uma instituição do Ensino Superior (IUE – antigo IPCV), com computadores Desktops, oferecidos pela Índia. Também, foram disponibilizados impressoras para as Delegações e Secretarias de diversas escolas. Por outro lado, e como forma de reforçar o parque tecnológico das escolas e disponibilizar aos professores outras ferramentas modernas para o Ensino do Sec. XXI, várias escolas do Ensino Secundário e Básico foram equipadas com 16 Quadros Interativos. Neste âmbito, foi realizada uma formação em Utilização Prática do Quadro Interativo nas diversas escolas contempladas, sendo que os grupos de professores formados foram organizados por áreas disciplinares. Estas formações foram ministradas pelo pessoal do Gabinete do PMN. Neste Momento existe um total de 38 escolas equipadas, sendo 23 do Ensino Secundário e 15 do Ensino Básico.
- Criação e lançamento do portal de conteúdos multimédia permitindo o acesso de ferramentas multimédias a todos os professores de Cabo Verde, facilitando a sua inclusão no Ensino para Séc. XXI.
- Introdução das TIC nos planos curriculares de todos os níveis da educação e formação.
- Implementação do SIGE – Sistema de Informação para a Gestão da Educação nas Escolas.
- Programa cada escola, cada professor um computador, que além de iniciativas individuais do governo em equipar as escolas com

computadores, procura parcerias público-privadas para garantir que cada professor ativo tenha um computador pessoal.

- Distribuição de computadores Magalhães aos alunos, visando que cada aluno pudesse através do ensino interativo 1:1 integrar-se ao processo ensino aprendizagem.
- Envolvimento da Sociedade civil, através das entidades Associativas no Novo Modelo educativo.
- Utilização do computador e software com conteúdos locais e adaptado à língua local visando diminuição da iliteracia entre a população adulta.

Todas Essas medidas tem facilitado a redução da brecha digital, assim como a formação de professores ativos mediante o desenvolvimento de políticas adotados pelo governo enquadrado no programa “Mundo Novu”.

Metodologia Do Estudo

El uso das TIC na prática pedagógica por parte dos professores do Ensino Básico na Região Norte da Ilha de Santiago, de forma transversal (Golzar, 2006), tendo como referencia o ano letivo 2009/2010, visando o fornecimento de pistas para colmatar as carências técnico-profissionais para fazer face à uma sociedade emergente como é o caso de Cabo Verde. Assim os Objetivos Gerais são:

- Pesquisar o nível do conhecimento e utilização das TIC por parte dos professores.
- Conhecer as perspetivas pedagógicas dos professores do ensino básico relativamente às Tecnologias Educativas.
- Identificar elementos que contribuem para a redução da brecha digital na perspetiva dos professores.

Para melhor atender às exigências deste estudo investigativo adotamos o enfoque misto, com recurso ao questionário visando a quantificar as respostas e à entrevista para garantir maior eficácia de respostas (Ribeiro, Echeveste, & Danilevicz, 2001). Neste trabalho

vamos centrar, especificamente, nos dados obtidos a partir das entrevistas realizadas aos professores.

Elaboração Dos Instrumentos De Recolha De Dados

Para a recolha de dados o instrumento utilizado foi a entrevista semiestruturada, onde optamos pela entrevista semidirectiva, por garantir várias características que combinam com a natureza deste estudo com especial destaque para a existência de um guião previamente preparado que servira de eixo orientador ao desenvolvimento da entrevista e pela flexibilidade na exploração das questões e otimização do tempo disponível.

O guião de entrevista para professores do ensino básico foi construído com base nos objetivos gerais deste estudo. Este guião apresenta sete blocos, onde constam os temas centrais da entrevista, os objetivos específicos e as questões. A tabela que se segue mostra a distribuição das questões conforme os objetivos e seu agrupamento em blocos.

Tabela 2

Relação de Formado no âmbito do programa IntelREnsino

Bloco	Objetivos Específicos	Formulário de Questões	Obs.
Bloco A Legitimação	- Legitimar a entrevista - Informar sobre a natureza do trabalho e suas finalidades - Informar sobre o objetivo da entrevista -Assegurar a confidencialidade das respostas - Valorizar o contributo do entrevistado	- Informar, em linhas gerais, a nossa investigação e o objetivo da entrevista. - Agradecer a sua colaboração, que é imprescindível para o êxito do trabalho. - Assegurar o carácter confidencial das informações	
Bloco B Uso das TICs nas atividades	- Analisar o uso das tecnologias pelos professores do Ensino Básico?	- Que tecnologias usadas como recurso para a preparação e execução das suas atividades letivas? - Quais são os recursos que a escola	

diárias do professor		dispões? - Que software usas, normalmente nas suas atividades diárias e par que fim? - Que serviço procura na Internet e quanto tempo demora conectado por semana (dia)? - Que comparação faz do aproveitamento dos alunos nas aulas ministradas com base em TIC e nas tradicionais? - Acha que os alunos usam os computadores de que dispõe para fins adequados? - Acha que os pais têm condições para orientarem aos seus filhos no uso da TIC? - Que melhorias espera na prática das suas atividades profissionais, com a introdução de computadores nas escolas?	
Bloco C Formação	- Recolher informação a formação de professores par o uso das TIC nas suas atividades profissionais	- Fez alguma formação no domínio da Informática? E que programa tem mais habilidade para usar? - Poderia especificar o que gostaria de aprender dentro desta área? - Que formação será necessária para o professor poder usar tecnologias Educativas nas suas atividades profissionais e fazer face ao programa “Mundu Novu”?	
Bloco D Acesso às TIC	- Identificar a presença da TIC no Ensino Básico - Avaliar aspetos logísticos para o acesso/uso das TIC nas escolas	- As Escolas dispões de recurso TIC adequados para apoiar professores - A escola está a gerir convenientemente os recursos tecnológicos de que dispões? - Os professores tem feito bom proveito das tecnologias disponíveis em benefício das suas atividades letivas? - Existem grandes diferenças em termos de acesso, e capacidade de uso das TIC no seio dos professores	

Bloco E Programa “Mundu Novu”	-Avaliar o conhecimento/ligação do professor ao programa “Mundu Nonu”.	- Conhece o programa “Mundu Novu”? - Que perspectiva em relação a este programa? - Conhece um Computador Magalhães? É adequado? - Trabalha com alunos que tem computador Magalhães?	
Bloco F Questões Finais e agradecimentos	- Saber se existem aspetos a acrescentar. - Agradecer a colaboração prestada.	- Perguntar ao entrevistado se propõe algum aspeto ou esclarecimento complementar para os objetivos do trabalho. - Formular os agradecimentos e a colaboração prestada.	

As entrevistas, decorreram, duas delas nas escolas onde trabalham os professores e uma outra a casa do próprio entrevistado. Os entrevistados, conhecerem as intenções da investigação mostraram-se muito interessados e colaboraram muito bem. Cada entrevista durou cerca de meia hora e com permissão dos entrevistados, foram todas gravadas, estudadas e transcritas posteriormente.

Participantes

Os entrevistados são todos professores, do Ensino Básico no Concelho e apresentam descrições conforme a tabela a seguir.

Tabela 3

Caracterização dos entrevistados

Entidade	Idade	Sexo	Formação académica	Anos de experiência profissional	Nível educativo com que trabalha...	Conhecimentos TIC
Professor P1	30	Masculino	Professor do Ensino Básico (Curso	7	6º ano de escolaridade	- Conhecimentos autónomos - Habilidade técnica de manutenção

			Médio)			de computares (Hardware e Software) - Dmínio avançado de Windows e Office - Ministra aulas com Base nas TIC - Autodidacta em TIC
Professor P2	40	Masculino	- Professor do Ensino Básico (Curso Médio) - Professor do Ensino Secundá rio (Licenci atura em Filosofia)	15	Coordenador	- Conhecimento avançados de Windows e Word, Ecel PoiwerPoint na ótica de utilizador. - Nunca ministrou aulas com base nas TIC no Ensino Básico.
Professor P3	47	Feminino	Professor do Ensino Básico (Curso Médio)	20	4º ano de escolaridade	- Fraco conhecimento de informática - Possui e não usa computadores no dia-a-dia. - Nunca ministrou aulas com base nas TIC

A análise de conteúdo do presente estudo foi realizada recorrendo a um procedimento misto, uma vez que partimos dos temas/blocos do guião da entrevista, mas as categorias e subcategorias foram ajustadas a partir das entrevistas.

Neste processo, tivemos em conta os critérios enunciados por Bardin (1979) para a categorização: exclusão mútua (cada indicador não pode

ser incluído em mais de uma categoria); homogeneidade (um mesmo conjunto de categorias ou subcategorias só deve conter uma dimensão de análise); pertinência (das categorias e subcategorias face aos objetivos da investigação); e objetividade (a inclusão dos indicadores nas subcategorias e destas nas categorias deve ser clara e não ambígua).

Análise De Dados

A análise de conteúdos das entrevistas semi-estruturadas realizadas aos professores do Ensino Básico firma-se em quatro temas e respetivas categorias. A saber temos:

- Introdução de computadores e TIC no Ensino Básico (categoria: Posicionamento face à introdução de computadores no ensino e TIC e Prática pedagógica);
- Formação (categorias: Formação inicial e Formação específica);
- Uso das TIC no subsistema Ensino Básico (categorias: Condições materiais; Logísticas e Dificuldades) e
- “Mundu Novu” (categorias: identificação com o programa; Inovações no Sistema de Ensino cabo-verdiano e Computadores Magalhães).

Introdução De Computadores E Tecnologias De Informacionais No Ensino Básico

Todos os professores entrevistados se posicionaram a favor da introdução de computadores do Ensino Básico, felicitando o governo pela iniciativa e os colegas professores, que por iniciativa própria, já recorrem às TIC para execução de suas atividades profissionais. Referiram a benefícios comprovados por parte alguns alunos e professores que já começaram a usar as TIC indicaram um conjunto de vantagens teóricas, lamentando o fato de existir um algum distanciamento entre grande parte dos professores e alunos sem condições técnicas e matérias e a minoria que já usa recurso tecnológicos na sua atividade pedagógicas. Apontam aspetos negativos como a exposição de crianças a assuntos menos adequados e perturbações nos comportamentos dessas crianças.

Na categoria *TIC e Prática pedagógica*, pudemos auferir que professores já estão psicologicamente preparados para a introdução de TIC no dia-a-dia, do seu processo didático-pedagógico e profissional. Constatamos também que existem já alguns recursos tecnológicos disponíveis nas escolas para os professores mas muito pouco deles usam-nos. Os entrevistados tem acesso à Internet mas nem todos usam na para fins didáticos.

“Antes usávamos televisão e DVD para dar aulas de vídeo ...” [P1] e [P2].

“Alguns professores usam os computadores e as TIC, até para darem as suas aulas, mas a grande maioria não”. [P3].

Alguns alunos de centros urbanos fazem uso de tecnologias educativas, uns até enquadrado nas atividades letivas, orientados pelo professor. As escolas quase na sua totalidade não disponibilizam esse recurso aos alunos.

“Os alunos fazem pesquisas na Internet, colocam nas pen drives ou imprimem e vamos confrontar na sala”. [P1]

As TIC constituem fontes de desafios ou conflitos/instabilidade, no sentido piagetiano, desperta mais atenção e cria mais motivação e torna os alunos mais ativos. Arrastam consigo novos e melhores métodos de ensino. Os entrevistados manifestaram as suas ansiedades para a aquisição de novas competências educativas.

“Notei uma melhoria muito significativa no despertar de atenção” [(2) P1]

“... que irá criar mais motivação por parte dos alunos” [(2) P3]

Formação

Para este tema temos, os indicadores apontaram para uma elevada falta de capacidade técnica e pedagógica por parte dos professores, sobre tudo os mais idosos, que mesmo tendo as primeiras noções, durante as suas formações de base, demonstram poucas apetências, além de outros que não tem sequer as primeiras noções.

“... vão ao Instituto somente para adquirirem diplomas e mudarem logicamente na sua carreira profissional” [P2]

“... os professores existe uma grande parte que não tem nenhum domínio das TIC” [P3]

A categoria Formação Específica, estendida em subcategorias *Necessidades de Formação na área das TIC, Perspetivas de formação, Autoformação e Capacidades tecnológicas do professor versus capacidade tecnológica dos alunos*, podemos assegurar que há uma necessidade urgente de intervenção em matéria de formação em Tecnologias Educativas enquanto ferramenta pedagógica para garantir um ensino de qualidade, uma vez que as expectativas dos professores apontam para o apoio do governo e nota-se um fraco, ou quase nulo, investimentos em auto formação. Podemos saber ainda que é opinião quase unânime que uma boa parte de alunos de Ensino Básico domina as TIC mais do que seus próprios professores.

“Portanto, muitas vezes os alunos estão muito mais preparados relativamente as tecnologias de informação que os próprios professores” [(2)P2]

“Em termos de conhecimentos mesmo acho que há muitos alunos que estão mais preparados que os professores” [P3]

Contudo um dos entrevistados revelou-se como um autentico técnico informático que tem, prestando assistência técnica a várias escolas do concelho, um verdadeiro autodidata, em tecnologias educativas nas suas atividades letivas.

“... Em picos achada leitão, por exemplo, eu fiz manutenção em alguns computadores” [P1]

“... Já conheci muito professores que não passaram pela formação na área da informática e dominam muito bem por curiosidade, necessidade mesmo” [P1]

Uso das TIC no subsistema Ensino Básico

Todos os professores entrevistados afirmaram que as escolas não têm computador, Internet nem Data Show. Usam um computador e um projetor de vídeo (Data Show) da Delegação do Ministério da Educação, que devem ser compartilhados por cerca de trinta a quarenta salas, muitas delas situadas em localidades bem distantes do centro.

Realçaram a existência de alguns materiais didáticos como CD e DVD ROM, Leitores de vídeos e televisores. Grande parte de professores, cujos filhos estudam nas escolas onde trabalham os entrevistados, possui computador e Internet em casa.

Na Subcategoria Logísticas, conseguimos apurar, através dos nossos entrevistados que os equipamentos existentes são bem geridos salvo alguns casos que revelam falta de vontade por parte da administração da escola ou mesmo dos professores.

“Relativamente aos CDs estão sempre disponíveis é só fazer requisição e os manuais também” [P3]

“Eu acho que isso é uma falta de motivação mesmo de quem está a frente da gestão” [P1]

“Bem acho que muitas escolas não fazem um boa gestão porque, tendo recursos ficam lá paradas não dão o real valor que aqueles recurso têm. Eu conheço uma escola de um lugar em Santa Catarina que fez uma cooperação muito importante e recebeu cerca de 30 computadores mas aquela escola não diligenciou pelo menos para ter a energia eléctrica e fazer o uso daqueles computadores” [P1]

Na Categoria *Dificuldades*, subdividida em duas subcategorias, apontam a falta de equipamentos informáticos como das principais, cuja solução deve vir do governo. Como outras dificuldades, entre as quais as de carácter pedagógicas apontaram falta de conhecimento/domínio e receio face às TIC e novos métodos de ensino e falta de dedicação.

“Sim, dificuldades é a falta de equipamentos” [P1]

“...um problema enorme que as escolas terão de enfrentar, se calhar também o governo de Cabo Verde” [P2]

“... tive uma pequena formação mas não pratiquei” [P3]

“A escola não tem e eu não uso para dar as minhas aulas por isso não tenho habilidades para usar” [P3]

Programa “Mundu Novu”

Os entrevistados aplaudem o governo pela iniciativa mas baseados em informações referentes a notícias veiculadas pelos meios de comunicação social, afirmam que estão à espera de novidades e formação no âmbito do

programa e apelam ao governo a estende-lo à todas as escolas do Ensino básico do país.

“Ouvimos as informações sobretudo pela comunicação social mas todos nós estamos à espera das novidades do “Mundu Novu””. [P3]

Os nossos entrevistados dizem estar a espera que o programa venha poupar os professores e facilitar o processo ensino-aprendizagem, através de acesso à Internet nas escolas, atualização de conteúdos dos manuais e reduzir o abandono escolar. Afirmam que as expectativas só não são grande para os mais idosos que já só se preocupam com a aposentação.

Estudando a *mudança de paradigma* nota-se fundamentalmente duas posições. Um dos nossos entrevistados defende que o professor deve continuar a ser detentor de conhecimentos dizendo que quando o aluno dá um passo o professor deve dar dois, para não ser surpreendido, apesar de considerar o facto de alunos trazerem na bagagem conhecimentos para a sala de aula um fator importante para o processo ensino-aprendizagem.

“...com essa introdução os alunos e os professores podem até estar em pé de igualdade” [P1]

“Se o aluno dá um passo o professor tem que dar dois” [(2) P1]

“Então, o professor é o detentor do conhecimento e deve manter como tal, mesmo o aluno tendo acesso” [P1]

Os restantes entrevistados defendem uma segunda posição, afirmando que o professor não é nenhum detentor de conhecimentos, que seu papel é orientar os alunos na construção de conhecimento e acham interessante poder contar com a participação dos alunos. Afirmam que é altura de deixarem a forma tradicional de trabalhar para passarem a formas modernas.

Relativamente aos computadores Magalhães como uma das ferramentas básicas a sustentar o novo paradigma os nossos entrevistados dizem que não tem informações concretas e deixam um conjunto de perguntas: Como é que os alunos vão ter acesso ao computador? Será para os alunos? ou para a escola? Os alunos vão ter que pagar?

Destas observações ressaltamos que ainda não é tangível o esforço do governo no sentido de reduzir a brecha digital no coletivo desses professores. Estes, bem como suas escolas e/ou alunos não foram

contemplados nem com a formação nem com os computadores Magalhães, elementos que iam melhorar o acesso às TIC bem como as capacidade de utilização.

Conclusões

Neste ponto apresentamos as conclusões de um estudo feito que, respeitando as suas limitações, tem tentado estudar a realidade do uso das TIC no ensino básico na Região Norte da Ilha de Santiago e de que forma podem contribuir para reduzir a brecha digital e favorecer alunos e professores. Porém, foi possível tirar algumas ilações a partir dos resultados obtidos suscetíveis de responder às questões iniciais e objetivos que nortearam a investigação.

Constatamos que existem já alguns recursos tecnológicos disponíveis nas escolas para os professores mas muito pouco deles usam-nos. Nos centros urbanos os professores tem acesso à Internet mas nem todos usam na para fins didáticos, mas usam Televisão e DVD para darem aulas de vídeo e alguns usam computadores data show para esse efeito mas emprestados das delegações do Ministério da Educação uma vez que as escola não as possuem. Este também orientam os alunos a pesquisarem na internet e trazerem para as salas usando pen drives.

Os professores há quem possui computador pessoal e alguns usam nos para fins didático-profissionais, sendo o principal motivo de utilização a elaboração de fichas e testes.

Nota-se uma necessidade urgente de qualificação dos professores para o uso das TIC pois, apesar de serem formados para a docência e estarem motivados consideram que grande parte deles não tem nenhum domínio, mesmo da informática básica, tem receio de utilizar e acha que os alunos tem mais domínio que os próprios professores e que pelo facto podem sentir-se embaraçados diante dos seus alunos. Os menos jovens se encontram em situações mais críticas. Não tem a noção de como usar as TIC nas suas atividade docentes.

O Programa “Mund Novu” criou expectativas no seio dos professores. Eles aplaudem a iniciativas, mas só ouviram falar pela comunicação social e esperam a concretização, a tal mudança de paradigma, que como

se pode notar será alvo de muito trabalho, a tendendo a que não será fácil para quem ainda pensa que o professor é o detentor de conhecimento, apesar de considerar importante o facto de o aluno trazer na bagagem conhecimentos para a sala de aula. Os nossos entrevistados mostraram que não tem informações acerca dos computadores mangalhões anunciados pelo governo que irão suportar o modelo 1:1.

Os professores consideram muito notável a existência de brecha digital. Alegam que os mais idosos tem muito menos acesso, menos habilidades e receios além de estarem desinteressados relativamente ao uso das TIC nas suas atividades docentes. Entendem que os alunos podem tem mais acesso e domínio que os professores e presumem uma grande discriminação ao face acesso e uso entre alunos de centros urbanos (pertencentes à classe mais favorecida) e os alunos da periferia. Os alcances do programa Mundu Novu ainda não eram suficientes para diminuir essa brecha, pois a Região não tinha sido contemplada nem com a alfabetização digital dos professor nem com o fornecimento dos Recursos TIC que constam do plano de execução do programa.

Notes

¹ Concebido pelo Ministério da educação e a maioria das comunidades autónomas. Em 2011 surge o programa e-escola 2.0 que, de entre outros objetivos, pretendia reduzir analfabetismo digital em 50% até 2015, conforme a Agenda Digital Europeia.

² 968 I SÉRIE — NO 44 «B. O.» DA REPÚBLICA DE CABO VERDE — 23 DE NOVEMBRO DE 2009.

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Preventive socialization against cyberbullying

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Socialización preventiva ante el Ciberacoso

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Resumen

El ciberacoso ha aumentado en los últimos años, sobre todo entre el colectivo adolescente. Más del 40% de los menores en el mundo se ha sentido en algún momento de su vida acosado a través de las tecnologías de la comunicación y la información (TIC). Esta situación se agrava en España, ya que el 86% de los menores entre 8 y 12 años tienen este mismo sentimiento. Este artículo analiza, a través de la literatura científica, el ciberacoso que se produce a través de algunas aplicaciones y plataformas online. Además de estudiar las actuaciones que ayudan a superarlo y a erradicarlo.

Palabras Clave: Ciberacoso, socialización, prevención, TIC, comunidad, menores, infancia, adolescencia.

Preventive Socialitation against Cyberbullying

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Abstract

Cyberbullying has been increased in recent years, above all among teenagers. More than 40% of underage youth around the world has felt bullied through Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sometime in their lives. This situation is even worst in Spain, where the 86% of minors between 8 and 12 years old have this same feeling. This paper analyzes, by means of scientific literature, the cyberbullying that is produced through different applications and online platforms. Furthermore, it studies the willingness of different actions in order to overcome and eradicate it.

Keyword: cyberbullying, socialitation, prevention, ICT, community, childhood, adolescence.

En el 2013 el 40% de la población mundial se conectaba a Internet (International Telecommunication Union, 2013). Concretamente en el Estado Español esa cifra se elevaba al 58% (European Comission, 2013). Este aumento propulsa la interconectividad mayor entre personas diferentes, de las cuales algunas son conocidas y otras no, a través de diferentes redes sociales, webs, foros, chats, etc. (Burgess, 2011). Las y los adolescentes tiene una activa participación en la red (Holmes, 2011), ya sea con la finalidad de comunicar, conocer, compartir, consumir, etc. (Bringué & Sábada, 2011). Así que los menores de edad no utilizan Internet solamente para estudiar, hablar o escuchar música, sino que para ellas y ellos es una herramienta elemental para relacionarse y de identidad (Observatorio de la Seguridad de la Información, 2009). Esto ha provocado que Internet sea actualmente un espacio más de interrelación social para las y los menores.

Adentrarse en esta red como apunta Livingstone (2010) puede resultar beneficioso, pero también comprende algunos riesgos. En Curriculum UNESCO de Alfabetización Mediática e Informacional (MIL) de 2011 se nombran 8 riesgos relacionados con el contacto online, de los cuales aparecen el grooming (acoso sexual a menores) y el bullying (acoso). El grooming, se refiere a los pedófilos que utilizan Internet con la finalidad de contactar con las y los menores de edad (Wilson et al. 2011). Mientras que en el ciberacoso o bullying pueden aparecer diferentes tipos, y estar ejercido por las y los propios menores. Ambos riesgos generan un desasosiego social, ya que perjudican en el desarrollo emocional de las y los menores (Ortega, Elipe, Mora- Merchan, Genta, Brighi, Guarini et al., 2012). Diversos estudios señalan que el acoso tradicional y el acoso online están relacionados con estados anímicos como la depresión, el miedo, etc. e incluso puede provocar el suicidio (Bauman, Toomey, Walker, 2013; Daine, Hawton, Singaravelu, Stewart, Simkin & Montgomery, 2013). Hinduja y Patchin (2010) señalan que este último es más propicio en las chicas adolescentes que sufren acoso online. Slonje y Smith (2008) apuntan que las imágenes y videos que se utilizan para acosar en Internet da más información visual a las personas. Asimismo a la víctima se le genera miedo, ya que ese material audiovisual puede expandirse a personas desconocidas y queda en la red durante un largo tiempo. También, en el estudio “El ciberacoso como forma de ejercer la violencia de género en la juventud: un

riesgo en la sociedad de la información y del conocimiento”(Ministerio de Sanidad, Servicios Sociales e Igualdad, 2012) se muestra como a través del ciberacoso las adolescentes también padecen violencia de género, ya que Internet puede ser una herramienta para realizar chantaje emocional, insultar o amenazar. El caso de Amanda Todd, una chica adolescente canadiense fue conocido mundialmente tras publicar un video en *youtube* previamente a su suicidio donde narraba el acoso sufrido por parte de un ex trabajador de una de las redes sociales más conocidas, y sobre todo como en su entorno inmediato (compañeros de clase) en lugar de recibir apoyo frente al acoso online recibido, sucedió lo contrario, sufrió más acoso hasta llegar al punto de sentirse rechazada, aislada, culminando su malestar con su propio suicidio. La escuela no intervino en resolver el conflicto creado por los acosadores. Desgraciadamente el caso de Amanda no es el único, y con testimonios como el de Amanda ha crecido la demanda social hacia el papel que debe ejercer la escuela en la prevención del acoso online, siendo en todo caso proactiva y no omisiva. El estudio “Online Bullying Is a Top Concern Among Youth” (Microsoft Global Youth Online Behavior Survey, 2012), realizado en 25 países señala que el ciberacoso es un fenómeno que está en auge y que más del 40% de menores expresa haberlo sufrido. En España ha aumentado en el último año los casos de ciberacoso, En el “Estudio sobre seguridad y privacidad en el uso de los servicios móviles por los menores españoles (entre 10 y 16 años)” (Pérez, de la Fuente, García, Guijarro, & Eugenia, 2010) de la INTECO, se revela que el 5,9% de las y los adolescentes entrevistados (N=644 encuestas personales en hogares españoles) afirma haber recibido mensajes o llamadas de otros menores metiéndose con ellos o ellas. En la misma línea, en la investigación “Riesgos y seguridad en Internet: Los menores españoles en el contexto europeo” el 16% de las y los menores entre 9 y 16 años aseguran haber padecido bullying tanto en Internet como Offline (Garmendia, Garitaonandia, Martínez & Casado, 2011). Estos datos han ido en aumento, especialmente con la proliferación de herramientas de comunicación y la información que potencian estos abusos.

Kwan y Skoric (2013) señalan que estas herramientas dan la opción del anonimato o de la falsificación de la identidad a las y los acosadoras. Además de que provocan una autorevelación, es decir, que las personas desprenden sus barreras psicológicas y liberan los pensamientos íntimos,

sentimientos y necesidades de las personas (Chisholm, 2006). Un ejemplo real que sucedió en el 20% de los centros educativos¹ de Cataluña, tanto privados como públicos, fue el acoso por parte de algún alumnado de la aplicación para móviles *Gossip* y de páginas de *facebook* como *Informer*² ante lo que aumentaron las denuncias por injurias y vejaciones tanto a alumnado como a profesorado. Dichas aplicaciones facilitaban el anonimato y con ello omitían las directrices europeas sobre safer internet dirigidos a los operadores móviles focalizados en incluir medidas de protección a las víctimas como herramientas de identificación de los usuarios para facilitar las denuncias ante casos de acoso.

Delante de esta situación tanto el profesorado como los familiares de las y los menores se enfrentan a un gran desafío al que desean dar respuesta. Por ejemplo, la última Conferencia Internacional organizada por la European Parent's Association (celebrada en Lisboa, el 4 y 5 de abril de 2014), entidad que aglutina a asociaciones de familias de Europa que representan a más de 150 millones de familias, se centró en reflexionar sobre los cambios a los que deben hacer frente las familias en la actual era digital. En esta conferencia, asociaciones de familias de diferentes países de Europa, debatieron y reflexionaron durante dos días junto a personas expertas sobre los derechos de la infancia y la prevención del ciberacoso.

Ante ese desafío tanto las familias como el profesorado están pidiendo que se preste atención urgente en tres aspectos: en la creación de políticas específicas, el aumento de la conciencia en los equipos educativos y las estrategias para poder detectar y prevenir desde casa (Eden, Heiman & Olenik-Shemesh, 2013). Este punto es necesario porque solo a través de la prevención se puede contribuir a reducir el número de posibles víctimas de acoso, promoviendo así a í una sociedad libre de violencia.

Estudios pioneros como los de Gómez (2004) demuestran que el origen de la violencia yace en un tipo de socialización donde la atracción se vincula a la violencia, siendo la raíz social del porque sigue existiendo los niveles de violencia en las relaciones humanas en pleno siglo XXI. Para Gómez, el atractivo es social y por tanto se puede cambiar, lo que hay que coordinar precisamente son las interacciones sociales para promover modelos de atractivo no violentos y contrastar así este tipo de socialización en la sociedad representados reiteradamente en los diferentes medios de comunicación.

Actualmente un agente prioritario en la socialización de la adolescencia son los medios de comunicación (Badaoui, Lebrun & Bouchet, 2012; O’Keeffe, Clarke-Pearson & Council Commun & Media, 2011). En dichos medios los contenidos que se proporcionan en muchas ocasiones tienen un componente violento. Ybarra, Diener-West, Markow Leaf et al. (2008) apuntan que el consumo de medios de comunicación con contenido violento está vinculado a un mayor factor de riesgo en la asunción de compartamientos violentos de las personas, “...community violence is linked to risk for seriously violent behavior in a manner similar to that associated with consumption of violent media” (Ybarra, 2008, p.935). Así es como la tendencia predominante ejemplificada en los medios de comunicación promuevan un tipo de socialización del atractivo hacia la violencia y que el colectivo adolescente sea más vulnerable a ser influido por este tipo de socialización del atractivo hacia la violencia (Gómez, 2004; Rebellon & Manasse, 2004). Por ello es importante que se trabaje en la educación para prevenir los riesgos y la influencia negativa de los medios que reciben las y los adolescentes. La forma de hacerlo que destaca la literatura científica internacional es el diálogo reflexivo. Como apunta Pulido (2010) “la información que se facilita [en las acciones preventivas con familias] va acompañada de la recomendación de ser abiertos y comunicativos con sus menores, porque el diálogo es la base esencial para prevenir.” (p. 165).

Una actuación de prevención de este tipo de violencia es el modelo dialógico de prevención y de resolución de conflictos, especialmente en los centros educativos. En el que se articulan las medidas necesarias para vehicular este diálogo reflexivo entre todos los colectivos: menores, adolescentes, familiares, profesorado y demás miembros de la comunidad. Modelo basado en el concepto de Socialización Preventiva que parte de las investigaciones realizadas por Gómez (2004), quien realizó un análisis riguroso de los diferentes planteamientos teóricos y demostró que el origen de la violencia deriva de una histórica socialización de la atracción hacia la violencia, y el Grupo de Mujeres Safo de CREA - UB (Centro de Investigación en Teorías y Prácticas Superadoras de las Desigualdades Sociales de la Universidad de Barcelona) ha continuado desarrollando en sus investigaciones (Valls, R., Puigvert, L. & Duque, E. (2008); Christou, M., & Puigvert, L.; 2011).

A partir de este concepto de Socialización Preventiva y del diálogo reflexivo citado anteriormente, en este modelo se incentiva y se articula el diálogo entre toda la comunidad educativa para posibilitar no sólo la reflexión sobre la violencia, sino sobre todo la participación de todos los agentes implicados a lo largo de todo el proceso normativo realizado en el centro para la prevención y superación de estas acciones negativas. El consenso entre todas las partes implicadas se convierte así en el protagonista del proceso.. Asimismo se genera un diálogo en la comunidad de todo el proceso normativo que se esté generando. Todo ello fomenta a la mejora de la convivencia de toda la comunidad educativa (Valls, Puigvert & Duque 2008).

Metodología

El presente estudio se ha realizado a su vez partiendo del trabajo sobre Socialización Preventiva de la violencia de género de Gómez (2004) y posteriormente de los estudios realizados por el Grupo de Mujeres Safo del Centro Especial en Teorías y Prácticas Superadoras de Desigualdades (CREA) de la Universidad de Barcelona. Entre los cuales se encuentran algunos específicos centrados en el análisis y la superación de casos de ciberacoso que se realizan a través de diferentes herramientas online (aplicaciones, redes sociales, etc.), como por ejemplo el artículo “Gender Violence among teenagers: Socialization and prevention”, donde se identifica el vínculo que hay entre atracción y violencia en un tipo de socialización donde la atracción se vincula a la violencia (Valls, Puigvert & Duque, 2008). Para la realización de la presente investigación hemos realizado en primer lugar una revisión de la literatura científica sobre la realidad del ciberacoso y la hemos analizado desde la perspectiva de la socialización preventiva, con la finalidad de contribuir a la prevención y al desarrollo de modelos de relaciones libres de violencia. Dicha revisión se ha centrado en artículos indexados en la base de datos del ISI Web of Knowledge priorizando que estuvieran incluidos en revistas del Indice Journal Citation Report. A su vez, se han analizado y tomado en consideración algunas de las contribuciones realizadas en investigaciones de I+D+I, como son: Por un lado , el estudio I+D+I “ACT-COM. Actos comunicativos y superación de las desigualdades sociales en las relaciones

de género (2006-2008)” en el que se muestra que algunos actos comunicativos verbales reproducen la violencia, especialmente a violencia de género. Y, por otro lado, la investigación el I+D+I “Espejo del ascenso y socialización de la violencia de género (2010-2012)” donde se estudia el error de percepción que tienen las personas que asocian las relaciones afectivo-sexuales basadas en la violencia a un aumento de estatus social o de atractivo.

Este análisis exploratorio ha permitido por un lado, hacer un repaso de las principales ideas que definen el contexto en el que se produce el ciberacoso y, por otro lado, como veremos en el siguiente apartado, ha permitido realizar algunas contribuciones teóricas para la socialización preventiva del acoso online.

Resultados y/o Conclusiones

La prevención en los centros educativos del acoso online es decisiva y necesaria para acabar con el acoso entre iguales y el ciberacoso. Por eso es necesario que los centros educativos incorporen diferentes líneas de trabajo como son: la formación de toda la comunidad, la promoción de las nuevas masculinidades alternativas, la formación de las y los adolescentes creando redes de apoyo entre iguales, y la aplicación del modelo dialógico de resolución de conflictos. Asimismo es imprescindible que se añada en todo el proceso y de manera transversal de todas estas actuaciones u orientaciones educativas la unión del lenguaje de la ética y del deseo.

A continuación se describen las líneas de trabajo para superar el ciberacoso en los centros educativos.

Formación de Toda la Comunidad Educativa

La comunidad es un elemento primordial en la contribución de la erradicación del acoso (Ma, 2001; Mellor, 1995; Ortega & Lera, 2000). Así que, por un lado, se puede observar que la familia (Ma, 2001) al involucrarse en las tareas escolares de sus hijos e hijas pueden contribuir en la reducción de la intimidación o acoso que surgen tanto en el centro educativo como en la comunidad en general. Y, por otro lado, se sabe que la escuela también tienen un papel relevante contra el acoso y el acoso online. Tattum y Herbert

(1993) señalan que el profesorado pueden discutir y aplicar medidas contra la intimidación o situación de acoso que haya en el centro educativo. Además, el consejo escolar y las asociaciones de familiares de alumnado (Mellor, 1995) en los procedimientos, las normas y los valores con un enfoque democrático basada en la participación de toda la comunidad (Ortega & Lera, 2000). Oliver, Soler y Flecha (2009) apuntan que es primordial que todas las mujeres de la comunidad (abuelas, madres, hermanas, tías, amigas, etc.) estén involucradas en la erradicación del acoso, especialmente si este es causado por razones de género. La participación de todas las mujeres tanto en el diseño como en la implementación de medidas de prevención contra la violencia de género en los centros escolares crea que haya una mejora de comunicación entre el profesorado y las familias. Además de mejorar el ambiente en la escuela y de favorecer la colaboración y la solidaridad entre los miembros de la comunidad educativa (Oliver, Soler & Flecha, 2009).

Por lo tanto, para contribuir en la erradicación del acoso online y acoso es necesaria la formación de toda la comunidad sobre prevención del acoso y abusos online. Asimismo esta formación es una de las demandas que más se piden tanto por parte del profesorado, las familias, la comunidad y también de los propios menores de edad. En relación a este último colectivo podemos ver que en el Internacional *Youth Advisory Congress*, organizado en Londres de 2008, las y los menores de edad se reunieron con la intencionalidad de dar propuestas para poder luchar contra el acoso online. Entre todas las sugerencias destacaban fundamentalmente la formación rigurosa de toda la comunidad y la responsabilidad de las empresas de Internet la creación de mecanismos de prevención y de denuncia de la violencia, así como la implicación de los medios de comunicación para erradicar cualquier tipo de acoso.

Para ello es necesario que en los centros educativos se implementen actuaciones educativas que estén científicamente demostradas que funcionan y, por lo tanto, que contribuyan a la erradicación el acoso que existe en la escuela como en Internet. Por esta razón, las líneas de formación que se recomiendan a continuación son fruto de la revisión de la literatura científica más significativas hasta la actualidad. Estas líneas de formación son:

- a) Reconocer y detectar las relaciones en las que hay abuso y acoso online dentro y fuera del centro educativo.

- b) Aplicar actuaciones educativas basadas en la socialización preventiva de la violencia de género desde los 0 años, es decir, se debe implementar actuaciones que favorezcan la tolerancia 0 en todas las etapas de la vida, desde la infancia.
- c) Aplicabilidad en los centros educativos de aquellas actuaciones educativas que tienen éxito para la educación de los menores, como es la actuación educativa del “Modelo dialógico de resolución de conflictos” (INCLUD-ED, 2006-2011).
- d) Formación de toda la comunidad respecto a los documentos legales (locales, nacionales, estatales e internacionales) que aparecen entorno al ciberacoso.
- e) Y, por último, es importante que el centro establezca unas pautas de evaluación con la finalidad de observar que las normas de seguridad y de protección en relación a las Tecnologías de la Información y Comunicación (TIC).

Promoción de las Nuevas Masculinidades Alternativas

Durante años se ha pensado que la agresividad y la dominación eran unas características naturales que aparecían en los chicos *adolescentes* (Connell et al. 1985). Giddens (1993), más tarde definió a estos hombres como *mujeriegos* y *despreciativos* con las niñas y mujeres. Por lo tanto, dichos hombres son personas que maltratan y que ejercen la violencia con otras personas, especialmente contra las mujeres. No obstante, no existe solamente un único modelo de masculinidad, sino que hay una *varios* modelos de masculinidad (Higate, 2003; Warren, 1997; Gómez, 2004). Diversos autores apuntan que las identidades masculinas en el mundo están basadas en una diversidad de patrones culturales (Higate, 2003; Warren, 1997; Gómez, 2004), lo que significa que la masculinidad se construye según la socialización que se haya recibido. Flecha, Puigvert y Ríos (2013) señalan tres tipos de masculinidad: la primera tipología es la masculinidad tradicional dominante (MTD); es decir, son aquellos hombres que son agresores; la segunda es la masculinidad tradicional oprimida (MTO) la cual no es causante de la violencia de género pero no atrae a las mujeres; y, por último, está la nueva masculinidad alternativa (NAM) que son aquellos chicos que si que generan atracción y tienen valores igualitarios.

Los centros educativos son un espacio significativo en la socialización y

educación de los niños, las niñas, los y las adolescentes y en el colectivo joven. Por esta razón, es importante que se creen en los centros educativos espacios sociales e interacciones que potencien el desarrollo de las nuevas masculinidades alternativas en los niños y hombres, especialmente cuando estos son pequeños (Flecha, Puigvert & Ríos, 2013). Por lo tanto, es necesario que se eduque desde los 0 años, tanto en la escuela como en otros espacios, a los niños en este modelo,, una masculinidad atractiva desligada de la violencia que contribuirá a la erradicación de las situaciones de acoso.

Formación de las y los Adolescentes. Inclusión de sus Voces y la Creación de Redes de Apoyo Entre Iguales

El riesgo más habitual en la actualidad que pueden padecer los menores de edad es el ciberacoso. Por esta razón, es necesaria su opinión, su participación y la inclusión de sus voces en los programas de prevención del acoso online (Redondo, Pulido, Larena & de Botton, 2014) que se generen tanto en la escuela como en el ámbito político. La inclusión de su participación en el todas las acciones de prevención que se lleven en la comunidad educativa tiene que basarse en una perspectiva de diálogo, respeto y de horizontalidad. La implicación de los menores en las acciones preventivas permite unir esfuerzos para luchar contra el ciberacoso y el acoso que padecen los menores tanto en la escuela, asociaciones o otros lugares en los que participen.

Así que es imprescindible que se promuevan espacios de debate público en los centros educativos, en los cuales se debe ofrecer información sobre el acoso online y sus medidas de prevención con la finalidad de que los niños, niñas, adolescentes y jóvenes (como también el profesorado, familiares y la comunidad), se formen sobre esta problemática. Además de formarlos para que actúen en cualquier situación de acoso que puedan sufrir, ver o saber de algunos de sus compañeros o compañeras. Flecha (2012) apunta que estos espacios deben darse entre grupos de iguales.

Así que es recomendable que la formación en prevención del acoso online de los menores esté presente en todos los cursos académicos. No obstante, esta formación debe de ser efectiva, para lo que se debe incorporar la formación entre iguales (Pulido & Flecha, 2009). Por eso es importante la introducción de las líneas de formación propuestas anteriormente como es la: detección de una situación de abuso, aplicación de actuaciones de

socialización preventiva de la violencia de género aplicación del modelo dialógico de resolución de conflictos, formación de la comunidad y establecer normas de seguridad de protección de las TIC. Al mismo tiempo que se ha de potenciar que las y los menores creen sus propias redes de apoyo ante el acoso, las cuales también tienen que estar respaldadas por toda la comunidad educativa. Cowie y Berdondini (2001) señalan que los y las niñas implicadas en responsabilidades relacionados con el manejo de las situaciones de conflicto fomenta que se creen entornos de apoyo entre iguales, por lo tanto, se crea un ambiente de más seguridad y mejora de la convivencia. Un ejemplo de actuaciones son las que se han realizado por parte de *I-SAFE* y *ThinkYou Know* (Reino Unido) donde los propios menores tienen un espacio para formar a otros menores. Así que es imprescindible que en los centros educativos se generen espacios para que grupos de menores se formen entre sí, basado en las evidencias científicas mostradas y orientados por la propia comunidad educativa. Para iniciar estos espacios es imprescindible hablar y definir cómo se quieren llevar a cabo con los propios menores, ya que su implicación también en esta fase de decisión y definición es fundamental para el éxito escolar y personal de los niños, las niñas, los y las adolescentes y el colectivo joven.

Por lo tanto, la creación de estos espacios deben de promover relaciones basadas en la no violencia, afectivas y la socialización apasionada (Oliver et al, 2009; Valls et al, 2008). Además de aportar conocimiento y formación en temas de prevención.

Aplicación del Modelo Dialógico de Resolución de Conflictos

Como hemos analizado anteriormente, ante la prevención y resolución de casos de acoso y ciberacoso en los centros escolares es necesario introducir acciones que impliquen y hagan protagonista a toda la comunidad educativa. En este sentido, una actuación que se puede llevar a cabo en los centros educativos es el "Modelo dialógico de resolución de conflictos".

1. Implicación de la Comunidad. Para iniciar su aplicación es necesario que toda la comunidad educativa (familias, alumnado, profesorado, etc.) se implique activamente en el consenso de las normas y resolución de conflictos.
2. Creación de Comisión mixta. En este caso se sería la creación de un protocolo de actuación delante de acoso o ciberacoso. Asimismo es

imprescindible que se cree una comisión mixta (profesorado, familias, alumnado y miembros de la comunidad que estén interesados) con la finalidad de elaborar y hacer seguimiento de la norma.

3. Elaboración del Protocolo. La comisión mixta se ha de encargar de elaborar un protocolo de actuación contra el acoso online. Para ello se observa que es necesario recoger todas las propuestas que se generen en la comunidad y se elabore un protocolo de actuación.

4. Validación. Una vez elaborado la comunidad ha de validarlo por unanimidad y la comisión mixta ha de aplicarlo en su centro educativo.

5. Aplicación. A partir de este momento el centro educativo y la comunidad ha de llevar a cabo los protocolos de actuación en los casos de acoso y ciberacoso que aparezcan.

Por lo tanto, los centros educativos y la comunidad en general pueden contribuir a erradicar esta lacra social y hacer que muchos niños y niñas vivan en un entorno libre de violencia, como puede ser el centro educativo.

Uso del Lenguaje de la Ética y el Deseo en la Comunidad Educativa

Un elemento transversal en todas las interacciones que se promueven tanto en enfoque como en actuación de la prevención del acoso y del ciberacoso es el uso que se realiza del lenguaje del deseo como el de la ética por parte del profesorado, familias, amistades, alumnado y otras personas de la comunidad.

El lenguaje del deseo alude a los gustos, los deseos e ilusiones en temas relacionados con la atracción. Dicho lenguaje es interiorizado en las personas a través de las interacciones que realice el individuo, ya sea con su familia, amistades, escuelas, medios de comunicación, etc. “Through interactions with these persons, one builds and shares what one likes, what one does not like, what is desirable, detestable, what is positive and negative, and so on” (Aubert, Melgar, & Valls, 2011, p. 296). Mientras el lenguaje de la ética parte “...between what is empirical and what is considered acceptable or unacceptable” (Aubert et al., 2011, p. 296).

El problema se halla cuando el lenguaje del deseo esta desvinculado del lenguaje de la ética (Flecha, 2008). Diariamente aparecen muchos ejemplos de esta separación en nuestra sociedad, tanto en los medios de comunicación como en los centros educativos. En los medios de comunicación podemos ver constantemente esta desunión de lenguajes, ya que en la mayoría de

películas, videoclips, reallity shows, etc. se vincula habitualmente la atracción hacia la violencia y no al contrario, es decir, atracción hacia los valores positivos y la no violencia (Gentile, Coyne y Walsh 2011; Girl Scouts Research Institute 2011; Wallis, 2010; Zanzana, 2010). “Children who consumed higher amounts of media violence early in the school year had changed to have higher hostile attribution biases (both relational and physical) with resultant increased aggressive behaviors...” (Douglas et al., 2011, p. 205). Esta desvinculación de los dos lenguajes no es ajena a la escuela. Por ejemplo podemos ver como hay algunas escuelas donde en las fiestas que realizan a final de curso incluyen canciones donde se identifica un compartiendo de acoso hacia las chicas (como por ejemplo lo que es conocido como música reggaetón), y se obliga a aquellas niñas o niños que no les apetece bailar ese tipo de canciones increpando que no sean tímidos.

Tampoco ayuda a superar la violencia entre iguales y la violencia de género que se utilice el lenguaje de la ética, sin deseo. Podemos observar que en ocasiones algunos profesores, , familiares u otras personas de la comunidad, utilizan únicamente el lenguaje de la ética para potenciar a los chicos no agresivos, s diciendo que buenos que son mientras se le ríen las gracias a aquellos que molestan a otros compañeros. Por tanto las clases de educación en valores no tienen el resultado esperado si en las interacciones cotidianas no se produce esta unión del lenguaje del deseo con el lenguaje de la ética.

Así que la ciudadanía esa inmersa en una socialización predominante a esta desvinculación del lenguaje de la deseo y de la ética. Asimismo, Flecha (2008) apunta que el lenguaje de la ética no sirve para superar la violencia, si no va complementado por un lenguaje del deseo. Por esta razón, es importante unir la excitación hacia los valores no violentos y las personas que los reflejan. Así que el profesorado, como toda la comunidad, ha de vincular el lenguaje del deseo con el lenguaje de la ética para construir relaciones libres de violencia y atractivas. Un ejemplo de esta unión de los dos lenguajes sería la utilización de frases como: “Los que se posicionan en contra de la violencia son valientes”, “Los que ejercen o apoyan la violencia son cobardes”.

Únicamente creados espacios libres de violencia, donde el alumnado perciba diariamente que las personas consideradas como más atractivas son las que ejercen un posicionamiento claro contra la violencia, es posible

contrarrestar el tipo de socialización predominante que vincula el atractivo a la violencia, y por ende contribuir a la erradicación del acoso online y las interacciones abusivas, puesto ningún acosador ni acosadora como decía Jesús Gómez percibirá que le funcione.

Notes

¹ Para más información pueden mirar en: <http://www.diba.cat/butlletins/detall.asp?id=26908>.

² Para más información pueden mirar en:

http://sociedad.elpais.com/sociedad/2013/01/25/actualidad/1359145778_687442.html

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Cyberbullying: Bullying in the digital age

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Review

Kowalsky, R. M., Limber, S.P., & Agatston, P.W. (2012). *Cyberbullying: bullying in the digital age*. Wiley-Blackwell.

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Cyberbullying: bullying in the digital age es un libro en el que se mezclan las últimas investigaciones científicas, con las teorías y experiencias reales producidas en el ámbito del ciberacoso. Desde la ciencia pero también desde la sensibilidad de los autores por dicha problemática ofrecen al lector una visión amplia sobre la realidad que viven millones de niños y niñas cada año.

En los últimos años el ciberacoso ha incrementado, especialmente a causa de los avances tecnológicos como son las redes sociales, correos electrónicos, etc., los cuales han trasladado el acoso que se padece en la escuela a internet. Este libro tiene el propósito de educar a los familiares, educadores y la comunidad sobre el acoso online. Además de empoderar a las personas adultas de la comunidad en esta nueva forma de acosar con el objetivo que este no se normalice esta problemática.

La primera parte del libro los autores explican algunas experiencias de menores que han padecido ciberacoso. En esta parte los autores describen y profundizan en este concepto, es decir, aportan su definición, tipologías existentes, establecen sus diferencias respecto al acoso, detallan las características de los acosados y de los acosadores así como explicitan las diferentes modalidades que utilizadas para ejercer el ciberacoso (mensajes instantáneos, correos electrónicos, texto, los efectos que producen en la víctima, etc.). Asimismo los autores hacen una descripción de las

metodologías utilizadas en las diferentes investigaciones que se han realizado en los estudios sobre acoso online.

Al adentrarnos en la segunda parte observamos como los autores ponen a disposición del lector una guía práctica para asesorar tanto a los familiares como a los agentes educativas y ofrecen algunas sugerencias para prevenir el ciberacoso. Esta parte es interesante y de gran utilidad, ya que ofrece a los lectores adultos una serie de herramientas, acciones y recomendaciones para llevar a cabo en la prevención del acoso online. Además, los autores contextualizan su estudio y aportan una revisión y explicación de las diversas políticas y leyes que están relacionadas con el acoso en Estados Unidos.

En definitiva, este libro es una lectura imprescindible para luchar contra el ciberacoso y prevenir a los menores de padecerlo.

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