



COMPETENCIES AND MEDIA LITERACY IN PRIMARY

A case Study about
Advertising literacy

COMPETENCIAS Y ALFABETIZACIÓN MEDIÁTICA EN PRIMARIA

Un ejemplo de
alfabetización publicitaria



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RESUMEN

Este artículo desarrolla el concepto de *Media Literacy* aplicado a productos audiovisuales en niños de primaria, con el objetivo de conseguir en nuestros alumnos un mayor conocimiento y espíritu crítico ante la incorporación de los medios de comunicación en sus vidas, trabajando medios tradicionales y digitales.

El proceso de creación de productos audiovisuales que hemos desarrollado en un Colegio de la Comunidad de Madrid, adquiere una nueva dimensión al trabajar en el marco de la *Teoría de las Inteligencias múltiples* de Howard Gardner, y nos va a permitir observar cómo se ven afectadas las diferentes inteligencias a través del desarrollo y comprensión de piezas audiovisuales (Gardner, 2015).

Valoraremos cómo el alumno, además de obtener un mayor conocimiento del fenómeno mediático y una adquisición de destrezas audiovisuales y digitales, se beneficia de la estrategia de participación y aprendizaje colaborativo para mejorar en ciertas competencias relacionadas con varias de las inteligencias del autor anteriormente citado.

Palabras clave

Alfabetización mediática; alfabetización publicitaria; inteligencias múltiples; aprendizaje colaborativo.

ABSTRACT

This paper develops the concept of Media Literacy applied to audiovisual products in primary school children, with the aim of achieving our students a greater knowledge and critical attitude towards the incorporation of media in their lives, working traditional and digital media.

The process of creating audiovisual products that we have developed in a school of the Community of Madrid, acquires a new dimension to work within the framework of the theory of multiple intelligences of Howard Gardner, and will allow us to observe how different intelligences are affected through the development and understanding of audiovisual works (Gardner, 2015).

We will assess how the student, in addition to obtaining a better understanding of the media phenomenon and an acquisition of audiovisual and digital skills, benefits from the participation strategy and collaborative learning to improve certain skills related to several of the aforementioned author intelligences.

Keywords

Media literacy; advertising literacy; multiple intelligences; collaborative learning.

1. Introduction

Without losing sight of the jurisdictional framework on Media Literacy, which has been proposed by UNESCO, the European Commission and our own Education Law (LOE, LOMCE, etc.), the development of this research on creating an audiovisual product developed in a primary school in the Community of Madrid under the perspective of Howard Gardner's Theory of multiple intelligences is based mainly on the choice of the educational environment. (Gardner, 2015)

Therefore, we have opted for an educational institution that has launched a project with smart classrooms that offers, in our view, the ideal framework for the development of the research concerning Gardner's theory. This methodology therefore seeks to build *'a learning community, whose main objective is the development of intelligence and the values of each of its students, who plan, conduct and regulate their own activities, under the mediation of teachers that employ diversified teaching methods and propose authentic tasks, assessed by the students and teachers in a multipurpose and technologically equipped space.'*¹

On the other hand, this institution has added to its curriculum *the learning of skills of the XXIst Century*, according to the framework of the *Partnership for 21st Century Skills*, as well as social and emotional learning in its educational model through *Creative Resolution of Conflicts Program (RCC)*, program scientifically supported by Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional² that is headed by the expert on

[1] SEK Institution's educational model [see 04/07/2016]. Available in:
<http://sek.es/modelo-educativo/>

social and emotional learning Linda Lantieri³ (*Institute CASEL-Daniel Goleman*). This raises the educational system as the basis for action for the acquisition of knowledge through the exploration of concepts, inquiry and development of skills that foster critical thinking and creativity.

As Álvarez and Núñez claim (2013), educational innovation does not follow the same pace as technological innovation. Students using new technologies in their daily lives require readjustment of teaching strategies used in them. The information and communications technology (ICT) can help build a meaningful learning in an easy and motivating way.

Access to global information is a reality for all students; mass consumption occurs in their daily lives, both in school environments as after-school and therefore it is a priority to know to use it properly, they are able to analyze and assess their suitability, namely develop their own content and share it with a correct distribution.

These objectives, proclaimed worldwide by the framework of *Media Literacy*, are the perspective in which the creation of participatory community that will be exposed in this article, in which its members delve into the analysis and evaluation of audiovisual and advertising materials, from a transversal, multidisciplinary and participatory approach, as active and socially engaged citizens, as demanded by the mandate of UNESCO on these issues. (Wilson, 2011)

(2) Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning [see 04/07/2016]]. Available in: <http://www.casel.org>

³ Linda Lantieri, Senior Program Advisor [see 07/04/2016]. Available in: <http://www.casel.org/people/linda-lantieri>

Based on these premises, we have tried to develop a research focused on the **process of creating audiovisual products in the environment of the *Theory of multiple intelligences of Howard Gardner***. We are interested in observing how different intelligences are affected through the various stages of the creative process, always within a collaborative learning environment.

2. Research objectives

1. Assess whether the workshop evokes in students reflection and recognition on different media formats.
2. Assess the level of media and advertising competition that students have before and after the workshop.
3. Assess whether the creation of an audiovisual project influences the own abilities of each Intelligence as the theoretical framework that Gardner explains.
4. Assess whether the group or collaborative work is the right environment for the development of these skills.
5. Assess whether the completion of workshop has achieved that students will be more able to evaluate more critically and expertly audiovisual and digital media.

3. Methodology

The workshops are held with teaching units scheduled by the research team, agreed with the teachers of the Centre, to adapt the theme of the same to the school curriculum.

The project is developed in fourteen sessions of one hour and a half. Each session consists of two parts: the first part where the contents and objectives to develop are explained, and a second part of practical application of what has been learned by working in small groups of four to six students.

Previously, we have measured the level of initial knowledge of students on the topics to work on and new technologies, through questionnaires specifically designed for research with children, and by conducting a *focus group*. On these competencies, we had previously also given questionnaires to teachers and sessions are planned jointly with both tutors and with the Department of Information Technology and Communication Center.

The sessions have been assessed through indicators developed following the theoretical framework of Multiple Intelligences according to the criteria of UNESCO for the assessment of skills related to *Media Literacy*.

These workshops have been recorded for their study in an environment of ethnographic research. We used ethnography transversely to study each of the sessions, keeping track of them in a field notebook, while regular meetings are held with both students and tutors to contrast the evolution of these workshops.

Students in these courses of Primary Education work in a crosscutting and multidisciplinary way, reflecting their findings in murals, videos, audios, using social networks and blogs created specifically by them. All these data are used as material for analysis.

The experience was developed through an active and participative methodology through *learning by doing*.

We consider interesting to note that, throughout the process, the children were who became "expert" teachers themselves of their peers in technology issues, giving directions to the class on how to improve their audiovisual works. Thus a model of *peer to peer* education is established, where all are players in the training process.

4. Theoretical framework

4.1. Skills and Intelligences. Theory of multiple intelligences

These concepts may seem the same, but they are not; in fact, both have a lot in common as arise from the need to find new answers to the inefficiency of traditional considerations on the development of knowledge.

The term *competence* refers to those skills that are socially necessary: economic, social, political or strategic component. Competencies can change according to social or political imposition needs, so you could say that the powers are the sum of knowledge, application and attitudes.

Howard Gardner, Professor of Psychology at Harvard University, Professor of Neurology at Boston University and Chairman of the Steering Committee of Project Zero at the School of Education at Harvard, argues that intelligence is not a unique ability and states that the human beings have different abilities related to what he calls different intelligences, so that all of us do not have a single intelligence but a set of *multiple intelligences*, some more developed than others (Núñez, Álvarez & Higuera, 2015).

The term *Intelligences*, according to the Theory of Multiple Intelligences of Howard Gardner, is remarkably different to the one related to the *skills*, while the first ones are born with the individual: according to Gardner, we are all born with a minimum of 8 intelligences, and the author suggests that, in addition to be innate, they are perfectly developable. Intelligences relate to the potential that every human being has in terms of their biological endowment, life history and geographic and sociohistorical coordinates in which they live (Escamilla, 2014).

Gardner (1983) began defining intelligence as *the ability to solve problems or create products that are valued in one or more cultural contexts*, but several decades later, having made advance in his research in this line of thought, raised a new definition of intelligence as *bio-psychological potential to process information that can be activated in a cultural setting to solve problems or create products that have value to a culture* (Gardner, 2001).

Gardner (2015) lists eight different intelligences: the verbal-linguistic, mathematical-logic, visuospatial, interpersonal, intrapersonal, musical, naturalist and bodily-kinesthetic. All human beings, according to Gardner, we have more or less developed these eight intelligences.

In short, what he considers is that it must be fairly valued the *traditional academic rational intelligences* (verbal-linguistic and logical-mathematical) but must also be taken into account other modes of expression of the individual unrelated to merely the cognitive. Gardner (1996) states that it is likely that the school of the XXI century will be based on *education for diversity*, understanding that not all people learn the same things at the same speed and in the same way and use the same standard or universal measure to assess the student is poor and limiter.

The Theory of Multiple Intelligences provides information on the different modes of data gathering, mental representation and communication that we, the individuals have and, consequently, on the ways we can go to stimulate the comprehensive and balanced development of all of them. Basic skills put us under curricular renewal, that in a cultural, economic, socio-historical and educational moment, the route is adopted according to give a reference to educational systems (Escamilla, 2014).

In this sense, Gardner's theory explains and justifies scientifically the change of conventional perceptions to a new orientation that is based on basic competencies (Marin, Barlam, & Oliveres, 2011). All the work we carry out to promote basic skills leads us to develop the intelligence of students. If the competencies are worked, intelligences are too (Escamilla, 2014).

4.2. Media literacy

Aguaded et al. (2015) note that in the recommendations of the Council of Europe (2006) appears the concept of competence in communication as the set of knowledge, skills, abilities, values and attitudes necessary in audiovisual contexts. These authors argue that the European Parliament (2007) defines media literacy as the ability to access, understand and critically create content in the media.

UNESCO (Wilson, 2011) promulgates the need for *Media and Information Literacy* (MIL), which refers to the basic competencies (knowledge, skills and attitude) that allow citizens to engage effectively with the media and other information providers and develop critical thinking and learning skills throughout life to socialize and become

active citizens. MIL teaching, according to the agency, focuses within a context pedagogical approach.

Media Literacy involves the process of acquiring skills and communication skills involving access to multimedia messaging, evaluation, readjustment, creation and dissemination.

From the pedagogical point of view, and under a citizenship education, talking about *Media Literacy* provides a number of benefits:

- Favors the analysis and manipulation of information.
- Aids for the purchase of critical thinking.
- Trains in the understanding of multimedia messages.
- Calls for the participation in the democratic expression of content, allowing the exchange of knowledge and ideas, according to knowledge, beliefs, values and attitudes.
- Connects directly learning with the culture of children, leading a constructive and meaningful learning.
- Favors the acquisition of citizenship skills in a multicultural society.
- Fosters respect, commitment and improves the environment.
- Offers the opportunity to express themselves freely and creatively.

- Amplifies messages created, allowing it to expand beyond the four walls of the classroom (Aguaded et al., 2015).

Proposing in a school environment a project of media literacy in advertising is a necessity that is determined by the *different* interest and different expectations that the media generate in the child. From the enormous capacity of assimilation of content and news from television or heightened emotions, interactivity and the communicative power of the Internet to the least power of introduction in magazines or radio (Núñez, Falcón, Figuerola & Canyameres, 2015).

As anticipated earlier, media convergence, new communicative contexts and the paradigm shift in these new contexts, implies the need for media and digital literacy programs (Núñez, Falcon, et al., 2015) addressing different contents that children and youngsters are, and will be immersed in the society in which they live.

The emergence of new advertising techniques that blend entertainment and attractive contents for children makes it necessary the implementation of educational programs, as young people find it difficult to separate the border between advertising and content: Advergaming, branded content, online clubs and other material specifically created for them.

Gardner (2015) emphasizes the importance of encouragement and instruction in the development of intelligence in this regard, the development of an audiovisual project within the school framework implies, of course, those intelligences that, in the terminology of Gardner, occupy a *pedagogical pedestal* in our schools, but also other skills such as spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, etc.

In short, an audiovisual production includes all the intelligences in a dynamic relationship: from writing or reading the work, assume characters, memorize a text, create costumes, rehearse music, play in front of an audience, etc. (Pozo, 2013), what happens is that to activate these different intelligences, it is necessary to identify the skills that relate to each (Gardner, 2015) (Antunes, 2000).

5. Development of Media Literacy and Advertising Workshop

This programming takes place in a classroom of 5th of Primary Education of a School of the Community of Madrid, with a total of 60 students from the three classes belonging to this course.

The duration of the project is a school year in which a progressive media literacy in advertising and communication by students is intended. This requires a total of 14 sessions spread as follows:

- 2 introductory sessions in which the student receives a first contact with the project and internalizes basic understanding of what advertising is and where we can find it.
- 5 sessions in which the student delves into the knowledge of the different terminology used in the various advertising processes through activities and viewings related to advertising.
- 7 sessions dedicated to audiovisual learning skills, focused on the acquisition of basic knowledge of language necessary to create an audiovisual piece of social character by the students. Workshops on audiovisual narrative, script,

editing, post-production, lighting, musical evaluation and interpretation are given.

5.1. Stages of the development of the Workshop

5.1.1. Previous phases

Before proceeding to the design and creation of the audiovisual product - spot -, students have been given, as noted above, several phases of *media and advertising literacy* so as to receive detailed information about the advertising process, with the intention that they could increase their communication competence in relation to the analysis and subsequent consumption of advertising.

It was also necessary to offer students another phase of assimilation of basic concepts about *audiovisual narrative* (film, television, advertising, digital, etc.) that allow students and their counselors handle the same terminology, resources and audiovisual expressive symbolisms.

5.1.2. Preproduction

It begins with the birth of the *idea* through *Brainstorming* and the different phases and using discussion as the procedure to confront ideas. Students should learn to keep their impulses and respect the speaking time, but others need stimulation to participate. Before starting the debate as an activity, the teacher has to teach students

how to hold a conversation, propose serious and interesting issues, respect turns of speech and opinions and take responsibility (Prieto & Ballester, 2010).

Essentially it is the *phase of creating the script*. Groups of students work collaboratively as writers writing the script of the spot, which is the literary expression of what you will see later in images.

5.1.3. Production

Once finalized the script of the spot we proceed to the collaborative design of a *storyboard*, preparing to record the different sequences of the same, performance tests, the choice of locations, sets and costumes.

Finally, within this production phase, the sub-phase of *recording or filming* occurs, itself, in which students take or record images (and sound) of those sequences (and dialogues and/or sound effects) they have decided in previous processes of script and *storyboard*.

5.1.4. Postproduction

At the end of the phase of recording or filming, students proceed to assemble the scenes recorded with the same team which now becomes a *montage team*. In this last stage of montage or *editing*, which is a period that requires a more technical knowledge, the student group "sticks" a scene after another, in a phase which will be completed the conception of the ultimate meaning of the film story, in this case the

spot, reaching essence of the audiovisual expression itself, articulating its language and giving a final sense.

6. Development of skills associated with different Intelligences in the design of an audiovisual product

6.1. Visuospatial Intelligence

There are many authors who argue that classroom projects that involve drawing, building, photographic and *videographic* practices, etc., motivate more to learn any content of any area (Prieto & Ballester, 2010).

Under these premises, encouraging the use of tools and skills referred to the visuospatial intelligence, teachers should create environments enriched with images and representations where information is transmitted in a plastic and visual way. The visuospatial Intelligence includes skills related to visual discrimination, recognition, projection, mental image, spatial reasoning, spatial manipulation and duplication of internal or external images (Prieto & Ballester, 2010).

Develop audiovisual projects obviously implies acting directly with and on visual and spatial aspects. The teacher can benefit from the influence of the use of audiovisual products as generators of a process of internalization of information, which are always reinvested in meaningful learning that can be very useful for students when the teacher knows how to take advantage of them (Pozo, 2011). The visuospatial intelligence can and should be encouraged in the classroom so that

children can develop observation, representation, artistic creation, imagination and willingness to explore new ways to experiment with materials and artistic compositions. In this way, children can self-express and channel their imagination and find different ways and opportunities to develop experience and skills necessary to manipulate art materials and tools (Prieto & Ballester, 2010). Thomas Armstrong (2014) raises the *display* as a teaching strategy for this visuospatial intelligence, which is that students create their own *inner board* (a kind of cinema of television "screen") in his mind; the author also resorts to the use or treatment of color as a learning tool, graphical metaphors, sketches (*storyboards*) or symbologies, all aspects which are not outside the process of creation of any audiovisual product.

6.2. Verbal-linguistic Intelligence

This intelligence refers to the ability to manage and structure the meanings and functions of words and language. Its symbolic and expression system are the phonetic languages.

Gardner (1983) proposes language as the fundamental paradigm of human intelligence, stating that the use of words to communicate and become aware, to express emotions, singing, etc., it makes us different from animals. It is the ability to think, along with words, allows us to remember, analyze, solve problems and plan and create.

Linguistic intelligence involves complex learning as semantics or meaning of words; syntax, which refers to the order of words in a given context; phonology, consisting of

being able to differentiate sounds, rhythms, rhymes and metric of words, and practice or different uses of the pragmatic functions that language has.

Some of the skills developed with these activities and with which we are in the audiovisual project refer to the *primary language functions*, such as: the narrative or establishment of a temporal sequence; research, referring to the curiosity of children and their ability to raise questions; description or child ability to detail features of the characters in the story; categorization or ability to classify objects and characters in the story; and *language skills* like narrative structure, thematic coherence, the use of narrative voices, use of dialogues, temporal sequences, expressiveness, the level of vocabulary and structure of the narrative (Prieto & Ballester, 2010). The narrative, brainstorming, voice recording, writing, an example of action and dialogue, etc., are teaching strategies for the verbal-linguistic intelligence listed by Armstrong (2014).

6.3. Bodily-kinesthetic Intelligence

It is the ability to use the whole body to express ideas and feelings, carry out activities or solve problems. It is manifested by specific skills like having body awareness, have a good control of body movements and the possibility of programming them, establish a connection between mind and body, develop mimetic skills or achieve an improvement of the various bodily functions.

An audiovisual production that incorporates drama, will also include, in the opinion of Montserrat del Pozo (2013), all the intelligences in a dynamic relationship. Reading the play, taking characters, memorizing the text, creating costumes, rehearsing and playing music. In fact, through the practice and interpretation, cognitive skills are

developed. These include the ability to organize thinking, perceive, analyze, evaluate and reason... for both the audiovisual work itself and in personal life. Thus an interrelationship occurs between this and other more *emotional* intelligences (interpersonal/intrapersonal). Using the body as a means of expression, pose a dramatization, acting in a play or *sketches* are perfect teaching strategies for the bodily-kinesthetic intelligence (Armstrong, 2014).

6.4. Musical Intelligence

It is the ability to produce and appreciate both the pace, the tone and timbre of sounds and evaluate the different forms of musical expression. It includes the sensitivity to perceive, identify and transform musical forms. It allows to recognize, create and play music.

Choosing the right music to the audiovisual product allows you to develop a range of skills relating to this intelligence such as the appreciation of the structure and rhythm of music, coupled with the ability to develop schemes for the enjoyment of music and rhythm and great sensitivity to sound, which facilitates recognize, create and play not only sound but also melody, rhythm and tone (Pozo, 2013).

6.5. Interpersonal intelligence

It is the ability to understand others and interact effectively with them. It includes the ability to discern and respond appropriately to the moods, temperaments,

motivations and desires of others and the ability to form and maintain relationships and assume roles within the group (Pozo, 2013).

Following Del Pozo (2013), some of the skills developed are effective communication, both verbal and nonverbal, the ability to understand the moods, feelings and motivations of others, the ability to work cooperatively, listen and appreciate the perspective of others, empathize with others and create and maintain group synergy.

In this sense, with *collaborative learning*, that we intend to use in all phases of audiovisual creation, it promotes a positive interdependence among group members as the conventional independent competitive learning is replaced by interdependent processes that require the participation and contribution of all students.

6.6. Intrapersonal Intelligence

It is the self-knowledge and the ability to adapt their own way to act on that knowledge. It involves self-reflection, *metacognition* and the correct perception of oneself. It includes knowledge of one's own abilities and limitations, awareness of inner states of mind, intentions and motivations, fears and desires, the ability of self-discipline and self-esteem and knowledge of their temperament and character.

Skills of this intelligence are: concentration, appreciation of the experience, the ability to think about the exercise of their own thinking, correct reasoning and at a higher level, as well as the development of thought and conscience of their feelings and the ease to express themselves (Pozo, 2013).

In this sense, in the development of our audiovisual creation workshop, we encourage a *self-directed learning*, in which students learn those skills where they have to take concrete decisions such as setting goals, allocate time and evaluate themselves. We agree with Montserrat Del Pozo (2013) in that it is a good activity to encourage pupils to propose topics of personal interest that wish to develop throughout the workshop. It is of particular interest in this section to provoke in students a *metacognitive* process about their work in the audiovisual, so they can get to consider a reflection on their own reasoning: how I think, how I reason, how to react to a problem, at what level of difficulty I am facing a challenge, what motivates me, how can I learn from my mistakes, etc.

6.7. Naturalist Intelligence

It is the ability of people to distinguish, classify and use environmental elements (objects, animals or plants) in the urban environment, suburban and rural. This intelligence involves understanding the natural world, including plants, animals and scientific observation of nature.

Skills or competencies that are observed in the development of naturalist intelligence are to respect living things, communion with nature, sensitivity to the natural flora, the ability to care and interact with living things, recognition and classification of species, growing plants or the ability to appreciate the impact of Nature (Pozo, 2011b).

It has been extremely gratifying to note that, in the phase of idea generation or brainstorming, students have opted for thematic about the protection of the environment and Nature, opposition to animal abuse, or care of living things in general.

6.8. Logical-mathematical Intelligence

The development of Logical-mathematical Intelligence within a project of audiovisual creation may seem, a priori, one of the least clearly defined, since it refers to the ability to use numbers effectively and to reason properly. It includes sensitivity to the schemes, logical relationships, statements and propositions, functions and other abstractions related to mathematical thinking and scientific procedures, in addition to the proper use of inductive and deductive reasoning.

The most important skills that are recognized in this intelligence range from being able to recognize abstract patterns, making good use of inductive and deductive reasoning, recognizing relationships and connections, being able to solve complex calculations to the possibility of using a strictly scientific reasoning (Pozo, 2013).

Having said that, this whole process of audiovisual creation has allowed us to find skills of stimulation of logical-mathematical thinking such as the outlining of the script, setting timelines on the issue, the use of chronological axes in the distribution of time action, sequencing, etc., skills, all of them very close to thought processes at a *higher level*, i.e. those processes that run through the levels of knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

7. Conclusions

The evaluation of the workshops has allowed us to check a growth of media and advertising competence in the students. After the assessment of audiovisual pieces created and edited by themselves and subsequently exposed to other colleagues, we have seen positive developments in these competencies, assimilating a language and some audiovisual, advertising, media techniques..., which were previously unknown.

We have observed that the use of Technologies of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) throughout this process of audiovisual creation among students has increased the interest and motivation in both theoretical and in practice.

The work that has been developed for this project has allowed us to differentiate what intelligences are developed in each phase of audiovisual creation and what skills have been used for each intelligence. However, the results indicate that the intelligences that appear in each phase are not unitary or appear in isolation but a constant correlation of several of them at the same time. This relationship of various intelligences comes from the necessary activation of different skills simultaneously. As Del Moral (2015) poses, the intelligences complement and interact in a coordinated way to solve the dilemmas that people face in real life.

After carrying out this activity collaboratively, a greater appreciation of group work by the students has been noticed, with remarkable presence of aspects related to education in values such as respect, friendship, equality and empathy.

The workshop has allowed us to detect, along with teachers, individual capacities and thus enhance this aspect of individual talent through the different roles emerged in the workshops.

Finally, we consider fundamental to advice that every educational process takes implicit an appropriate digital, media and advertising literacy because, as a lot of researchers and international experts rightly indicate in this field, these literacies should be part of all education plans (Núñez, Falcon, et al., 2015), as seen from the formation of the child with a critical view, designed by age and going beyond the production of parts, making them reflect, understand and create a more critical and mature mentality about the society in which they live.

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