

# Chapter 10

## Journalism and Communication at School in Order to Form Critical Citizens

**Simona Lamonaca**

*Istituto Comprensivo Giuseppina Pizzigoni, Italy*

### ABSTRACT

*In the present era, information is too often transformed into communication of products or services, rather than carrying out its primary function of disseminating knowledge and awareness. Some elements, like artificial intelligence, are often used for these purposes. To bring education back to its original value, journalism in the classroom can help in the improvement of our human intelligence to orientate in this very complex world. A journalism workshop helps school education in the crucial role of forming aware careful users of contents, since the communication doesn't spread anymore only by written articles, but also through video-news, spots, promotional campaigns, providing a lot of information about trends, economy, and politics. Students in these classrooms learn about what it means by checking the sources, verifying rights of uses, and finally, giving news supported with facts or promote ethical-social messages. Having a knowledge based on experience helps to develop critical abilities to use them.*

### INTRODUCTION

For years, we have been discussing the crisis that is affecting the world of information. The revolution brought by the web in this field is undeniable. If once you could access the world of information through newspapers or tv, today news travels and proliferates on the web so much that it gives us the feeling of being constantly overwhelmed by more or less important information. At first, we witnessed the proliferation of independent news sites, then, gradually, social networking sites and content aggregators entered the field. The result is that it is becoming more and more difficult for us to guide ourselves among the mass of news that we are constantly receiving: important news, secondary news, fake news, etc., which require a good capacity of understanding and analysis on the part of the readers. We are living in a situation where Artificial Intelligence can influence our interpretation of reality. The great diffusion of fake

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-7638-0.ch010

## ***Journalism and Communication at School in Order to Form Critical Citizens***

news and the increasing power of informatic algorithm used to select and order the news on our devices requires the enhancement of our human intelligence to orientate ourself in a very complex world.

Following this premises, one of the challenges that today's school must therefore take on is that of training conscious citizens who are able to orient themselves critically in this area, an emergency that seems all the more pressing if we look at the growing spread of conspiracy theories and the growing disinformation of the younger generations.

*According to Newman (2020) "This year's report comes in the midst of a global health pandemic that is unprecedented in modern times and whose economic, political, and social consequences are still unfolding. The seriousness of this crisis has reinforced the need for reliable, accurate journalism that can inform and educate populations, but it has also reminded us how open we have become to conspiracies and misinformation. Journalists no longer control access to information, while greater reliance on social media and other platforms give people access to a wider range of sources and 'alternative facts', some of which are at odds with official advice, misleading, or simply false". (p.10).*

Thus begins the 2020 report of Reuters data on information published in June 2020. Indeed, the battle that the world of information is fighting in these years is certainly tough. Journalists must on the one hand provide increasingly fast and immediate information, in order not to be burned by unfair competition from unofficial sites, and on the other hand they must guarantee their professionalism through the truthfulness and completeness of their publications, carrying out fundamental operations such as checking sources, in-depth analysis, etc... Added to this is the fact that the reports of the last few years on Information (Reuters- see above) reveal how the number of users who access information mainly through social media or search engines is constantly growing, thus running into the news considered most important by the algorithms that regulate the virality of content. The result is that these users are superficially informed about the news of the world in which they live, if not badly informed.

Indeed, in this situation it is not surprising that the quality of official information has decreased over the years. That is why in England in 2014 Peter Laufer founded the Slow News movement (Laufer, 2014), theorizing the importance of stopping and taking stock of completed situations, working on deepening the news and thus counteracting the speed of current information.

The truth is that the world in which we live is becoming more and more complex and journalism today has to take on the task of helping citizens understand it, even more than it did yesterday. That is why it should renew itself quickly, accepting new challenges without compromising on the quality and reliability of its content, even if it is conveyed in a different way than in the past. If the world of information has its own challenge to work on, the educational world has another: there is no point in having quality information if readers cannot distinguish it from everything else. Nowadays anyone can publish anything and with a little effort (and the complicity of superficial readers) makes it viral. This is why it is important for the school to train conscious news users. They should be able to orient themselves among the plurality of media available and among the various types of communication that characterise them (articles, news launches, video-news, news, commercials, etc.), but, also, they should know the critical issues that afflict the sector today (Fake news, news for click baiting, hate speech titles...).

It is important that young people understand what makes one news item more credible than another, how much more serious an article that avoids sensationalistic headlines and language is, what a great opportunity it is to be able to comment on the news, when you have arguments to offer, etc...

24 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:

[www.igi-global.com/chapter/journalism-and-communication-at-school-in-order-to-form-critical-citizens/273027](http://www.igi-global.com/chapter/journalism-and-communication-at-school-in-order-to-form-critical-citizens/273027)

## Related Content

---

### Moving to the Worldvirtual: Affordances of 3D Immersive Environments for Teaching and Learning

Richard E. Riedl, Terry McClannon and Amelia W. Cheney (2011). *Teaching and Learning in 3D Immersive Worlds: Pedagogical Models and Constructivist Approaches* (pp. 1-14).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/moving-worldvirtual-affordances-immersive-environments/52389](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/moving-worldvirtual-affordances-immersive-environments/52389)

### Virtual Worlds as the Next Asset of Virtual Learning Environments for Students in Business?

Jean-Eric Pelet and Benoît Lecat (2012). *International Journal of Virtual and Personal Learning Environments* (pp. 59-76).

[www.irma-international.org/article/virtual-worlds-next-asset-virtual/67117](http://www.irma-international.org/article/virtual-worlds-next-asset-virtual/67117)

### Understanding the Use of Online Tools Embedded Within a Virtual Learning Environment

Eleanor Jane Dommett (2019). *International Journal of Virtual and Personal Learning Environments* (pp. 39-55).

[www.irma-international.org/article/understanding-the-use-of-online-tools-embedded-within-a-virtual-learning-environment/218216](http://www.irma-international.org/article/understanding-the-use-of-online-tools-embedded-within-a-virtual-learning-environment/218216)

### Motivational and Ethical Issues in Seamless Learning: Use of Tablet PCs in a Mobile and Ubiquitous Technology-Enhanced Learning Context

Pelin Yüksel, Süleyman Nihat adand Soner Yldrm (2020). *Mobile Devices in Education: Breakthroughs in Research and Practice* (pp. 681-696).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/motivational-and-ethical-issues-in-seamless-learning/242640](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/motivational-and-ethical-issues-in-seamless-learning/242640)

### Creative Networks of Practice Using Web 2.0 Tools

Jukka Orava and Pete Worrall (2011). *International Journal of Virtual and Personal Learning Environments* (pp. 37-53).

[www.irma-international.org/article/creative-networks-practice-using-web/51626](http://www.irma-international.org/article/creative-networks-practice-using-web/51626)