

The Press in The Classroom for Citizenship Formation in The Digital Age? Paper and Pencil Case in Public Education Institutions in Cartagena De Indias-Colombia

Marelbi Olmos

Universidad Tecnológica de Bolívar- Cartagena, Colombia

Melissa Mendoza

Newspaper El Universal Cartagena- Colombia

Abstract: *Papel y lápiz* (Paper and pencil) is the result of a qualitative research project carried out using the Participatory Action Research (PAR) as a model. *Papel y lápiz* seeks to teach young people and children, who are identified as being at high social risk, in 35 different public educational institutions (PEIs) from Cartagena de Indias, Colombia. The principle aim of the project will be educating them about the importance of knowing and understanding the often-harsh realities of their social situations with particular focus on the social risks each of them might encounter. *Papel y lápiz* also aims to teach students about the social situation of their city using media and specifically the press. Working alongside Educommunication, the aim is to start educating the young people in school classrooms, in other words the most formative years of their youth. Between 2019 and 2022 this research project has reached 712 students from various public Educational Institutions (EIs) in Cartagena. The project was materialized in collaboration with teachers and directors by creating 6 educational cards that incorporate the use of the press to analyze some of the most critical issues the city is facing.

Keywords: Citizen Participation, Educommunication, Action Research Participatory (PAR)

Citation: Olmos, M., & Mendoza, M. (2023). The Press in The Classroom for Citizenship Formation in The Digital Age? Paper and Pencil Case in Public Education Institutions in Cartagena De Indias-Colombia. In M. Koc, O. T. Ozturk & M. L. Ciddi (Eds.), *Proceedings of ICRES 2023-- International Conference on Research in Education and Science* (pp. 1875-1883), Cappadocia, Turkiye. ISTES Organization.

Main topic

Papel y lápiz, is a collaborative project between the Press-school Program from the newspaper *El Universal* and the *Universidad Tecnológica de Bolívar* (UTB). The key aim of this project (developed in different public EIs of Cartagena) is to open a space for reflection, analysis, and research on the city's issues with teachers and students at public schools in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia.

General objective

To encourage critical and reflective reading by students of EIs in Cartagena using the press so that they might be able to propose solutions to the wide range of problems facing their school, city and beyond.

Specific objectives

- To apply the Participatory Action Research (PAR) methodology in the classroom to incorporate the media in teaching.
- To promote the critical reception of the content found in the media, as well as the development of creative and communicative capacities in the students from EIs in Cartagena de Indias (during the years 2018 to 2022).
- To establish a study, analysis, and selection processes in the classroom by identifying sections of the press, highlighting social, cultural, family, and personal mediations that influence the most formative years of the students.

Proposed Theoretical Discussion

The research explores how education and communication are related disciplines that coexist and are essential for production, transmission, and cultural transformation (Huerger, 2007). It aims to answer the question: *How to articulate the social appropriation of the press with the school, in such a way that interaction is achieved between the processes of teaching, and of integral and citizen formation for students in public EIs in Cartagena de Indias - Colombia?* So far, work has been done in 35 public EIs in Cartagena, aiming to rethink the concept of Educommunication and inter-learning (Prieto Castillo, 2006), focusing on the ways in which the new generation of students have incorporated the use of technology into their daily lives and how the schools must react in response. The research also sought to provide alternatives to overcome situations where technology is not available in the educational process due to deficiencies both in the physical infrastructure of EIs, and the lack of hardware and software.

Due to the lack of clear public policies regarding the provision of resources for basic or average education are affected by low levels of results in the academic achievement of its students. According to a report by the Cartagena Observatory *Cartagena Cómo vamos* in 2020 where 79% of the IE in the city do not exceed the C+ level, the second lowest on the scale, where A+ is the highest in the Saber 11 tests. The research then explores how education and communication as related disciplines can be essential for the production, transmission, and educational, and cultural transformation of students.

This is described in several conceptions and tendencies to explain the relationship between communication and education: One, communication as control in education. The second trend, in which education demands

communication as of the role of a teacher-actor, i.e., expressing oneself as a means to teach. This accentuates the idea of communication as a matter of the correct emission of messages (Huergo, 2007). In this sense, it is important to clarify the fundamental role that teachers from EIs in Cartagena play in the execution of the research proposal *Papel y Lapiz*.

Teachers have also used printed press to support the contents of their classes and in problem solving for children and young people, as well as topics related to their school, their neighborhood, city, and the country. *Papel y lápiz* project also aims to break the scheme of the educator-communicator as a privileged issuer who always gives the word and organizes, manages, and maintains relationships with others. This scheme is more focused on horizontal work, on interactions, on the possibility of building knowledge together (cit. Olmos, 2019).

In other words, learning to live pedagogical mediation in all areas of our lives is also giving meaning to social and human processes. Meaning goes through self-affirmation and self-construction, through the ability to interact and appropriate knowledge, through growth without violence, through the joy of learning and the feeling of self-construction as a being (Condo, 2012).

Apart from all this, the study of the three aspects (communication, education, and society) can allow the implementation of new strategies to replace the previous ones.

It is important at this point, that educators and communicators must assume in the educommunicative processes. Since, in this qualitative research, located within a socio-critical paradigm, the problem was addressed from the Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach of the sociologist Orlando Fals Borda (2008). At the same time, it allowed the actors involved in the research (student, teacher, social communicator) to contribute from their own knowledge in the creation and analysis of content from the press, based on the realities of their school context and that of their families and their cities.

Furthermore, considering that they are public schools located in sectors of Cartagena at high social risk for the student, and that they come from adverse family realities. Moreover, the proposal aims to create bridges and channels of communication between the school, the student, and the parent, not from the media, but *with* the media, in such a way that children and young people can communicate with everyone. This is also supported by the creation of a language that integrates everyone in the process and allows them to communicate in a real, effective, and open way.

The *Papel y Lapiz* research, sought to understand the relationship between communication and education using self-recognition, projection, and a critical analysis of the press.

If education is at the base of our humanization, if through it we pass from a bubbly atmosphere of sensations to articulate language, to caress, to gaze, to meaning and to culture, and if the educational act is profoundly and essentially communicational, (...) we will not be able to dream of educational or social transformations without playing to the core of our need and ability to communicate (Prieto

Castillo, 2004).

On the other hand, all pedagogical mediation is also a matter of communication, since it puts inter-learning at stake, i.e., the bridges that must be built and crossed between the teacher-student relationship and between culture and society and institutional (school) culture. Hence, knowing the implications of the relationship between communication and education can make us better educators in our daily lives and those who produce for the media, i.e., social communicators, must also be aware of our social responsibility when producing audiovisual and multimedia material alternatively from the recent coverage for entertainment and rather aim to also inform for education. This implies going beyond the media to focus on the relationship with the past, present and future, i.e., the school in its training process must make creative use of the media in the classroom (Orozco, 2014).

Methodology

Papel y lápiz is a qualitative research, that has shown that social, symbolic and imaginary representations of the students and are reinforced by the contents they consume through the different media that reinforce their beliefs or serve as references.

As for the information collection technique, participant observation, interviews, questionnaires with closed answers, as well as didactic workshops were carried out. The latter being applied to students between year seven and year nine, to know how they received different media on different platforms. Later, topics were established for critical and reflective analysis on school, social, cultural, and family lives represented in different news, editorials, opinion columns and other sections of the press. As a result, the student could start recognizing their journey in life within their school, family, city, country, and the world.

All the above were collected using PAR methodology with the students. The workshops were a key method because they were based on the students' own knowledge and feelings (Fals Borda, 2008), using appropriate language for their classes' year. Finally, illustrated content was taught, with cartoons and characters, games, and aimed at helping the students understand their own unique social situation.

Results

This approach of the PAR methodology has been fundamental for the creation of a collection of 6 different sets of results on the use of the printed press. The first three have been published in newspapers and tabloids. *Papel y lápiz* is a tool designed to encourage critical and reflective reading of the printed press. This tool was seen as fitting for the students' curriculum since it would be didactic, practical, and consistent with what could be done in public EIs in Cartagena with deficient or almost non-existent infrastructure and technological conditions. Using traditional printed press did not require greater economic demand from the EIs, but did require an effort

and interest involving the most important local media outlet in the city, *El Universal*, and by part of the Communication and education *Semillero* (seedbed) of the Universidad Tecnologica de Bolivar (UTB).

After a year developing workshops that included the use of digital tools, it was possible to determine that it was complex to try to apply these tools in EIs with few resources, that is why the use of the traditional printed press was advised. It was then concluded that due to the conditions in which the EIs are located, the printed press was the format that best adapted to the different social contexts of each school. Thus, the first edition of *Papel y lápiz* is associated with the recognition of the press. The content is made up of 7 parts, which contain practical exercises for students to understand the world through the news.

This project stimulates the use of the printed press in an entertaining and above all useful way. Therefore, the first stage of the project was the creation of several booklets devised to teach students the basic characteristics that make up a newspaper as explained by the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers WAN-IFRA from its educational division. It is important to note that the creation of the deliverables designed by *Papel y lápiz* project arises after using educommunicative components for training and workshops with teachers and students, in different EIs in the city. 1,479 people were impacted so far, including teachers, students, and parents (Olmos, 2019). The students and teachers mentioned above, trained in audiovisual literacy workshops and critical analysis of the media and citizens. Consequently, 712 students have received training on the use of the traditional newspapers to improve their communication skills from writing and learning to make their approaches to problems visible raised around their schools, their neighborhoods, their city, and their country. Within the first deliverable, it was proposed explaining different parts that make up a newspaper, such as:

- The cover or first page: The students learned what the key elements of a cover were, which constitutes the hook for readers. Within its characteristics, it must be striking, have an attractive design, and a good photograph and headline. After understanding this, the students were able to recognize the micro formats that make up the front page of a newspaper. To identify these elements, the students answered some questions that were formulated in a first primer and that account for the interpretation that the students made of the information provided on the cover.
- The internal page: It refers to the structure of the newspaper, taking the local newspaper *El Universal* as an example. The student began by teaching the name of the sections, the columns of the newspaper, the number of pages and the micro formats that make up the internal pages.
- As well as sections called: Play with language; it is better to listen; understanding the context; economic indicators/advertising; sports, among others.

After the second edition of *Papel y Lápiz*, *Applying what has been learned* section was incorporated, which consisted of developing exercises related to what was published in the *It is better to listen* section of the previous edition. In this deliverable of *Applying what has been learned* from *Papel y Lápiz*'s collection, 8 topics were covered: *Hablemos en realidad*: The students reviewed the news from the newspaper, defined what was news, what was happening in their community environment, and discussed the city. The objective was for the

students to be able to identify the positive and negative of what was happening in the city. As well as sections called: Another vision; build the world you dream of; Shopping; Play with language; assuming commitments; read and write and fun.

From the third deliverable of *Papel y Lápiz*, called, *The opinion edition*, students were invited to read the opinion of others, since it allowed them to awaken a critical sense in the face of the realities analyzed. This third edition sought for students to understand the thinking of various columnists so that they in turn awaken their critical thinking in relation to the context in which they live. Like the previous installments, this third edition had the following sections: *Applying what has been learned*, where what was sought was to promote a dialogue around a mobility news in Cartagena that announces a considerable number of drivers fined for infractions on the different roads of the city.

In this space, it was proposed to review the approach made by the journalist and find out if the editor answered the 5 questions that a news item is considered to answer: by answering what, who, how, where, and why the events occurred. With the objective that the student analyzes the news, evaluate it, and at the same time, also analyze the management of the different public entities in charge of the news event.

- *Hablemos en realidad*: It corresponded to the part of the analysis of the newspaper related to the editorial, which is based on guidelines proposed by the journalism association WAN IFRA in the booklet *Read and learn with newspaper* (2019). Thus, through the editorial, the newspaper analyzes, assesses, and interprets a news item of local, national, and international interest.

The students were explained what an editorial was in a newspaper, considered as a space reserved for the opinion of the information company, about an event that affects the lives of its readers. In this way and considering the above, it was sought that the students take sides, defend their ideas, and socialize them, in relation to a specific topic, trying to achieve a certain consensus.

In this way, the students read the editorial that was published in the local newspaper *El Universal*, and explained what it was about, to determine whether it was of interest to everyone and, finally, they wrote their opinion about the topic.

- *Otra visión*, it was the third section of this installment, where it was sought that, through a caricature, the students critically raised some situation that the cartoonist of the newspaper captured and that the student could controvert in a humorous and reflective way.
- *Construyendo el mundo que sueñas*: In this case, the student looked at his city and realized that Cartagena needs attention from the mayor and the townhall, that it requires a sense of belonging to the city and that projects are undertaken to improve the quality of life of its inhabitants and that, in addition, their leaders will think in terms of improving their city.

The idea was for the students to find two photographs of two characters who, according to them, were working to solve the problems of the city, with the idea that they would get to know the characters and profiles of those who manage the city.

The other part of *Construyendo el mundo que sueñas*, the symbols that Cartagena has as historical heritage were looked at, however, the forgetfulness of the competent authorities and the misconduct of its citizens, affect its deterioration, for this reason, it is important to emphasize in the student, the commitment to preserve them.

In the section, *De compras*, specific talk was made of the classifieds, which are advertisements that are published in the press and digitally, and that are part of advertising. They are cheaper in terms of texts, easy to understand and sectioned by categories, such as: real estate, business, jobs, vehicles, which allows the student to have an overview of the social, economic, and cultural offer of the city. Here the student had to select, and report classified ads, determine which section they belonged to and what type of classified it was.

Juega con el lenguaje, apart from that third deliverable, was a space intended for students to extract grammatical figures such as nouns, adjectives, verbs, synonyms, antonyms so that, based on the news. They could also decipher these elements and do an exercise in understanding a text in a simple and practical way.

Asumiendo compromisos, in this section of this third deliverable of *Papel y Lápiz*, period, we looked at how students were motivated to work as a team for their city. The student was required to present useful ideas so that they were later executed. For example, the use of social networks for the benefit of the city. The result showed that a brief debate could be organized in the classroom and that, from this, a proposal for social change for the city be generated.

Lee y redacta, in this section, a column was chosen where through the text, the student deciphered the writer and commented in class about the opinion article and whether or not he agreed with what the author mentioned; with literary figures; about what they thought of the closing of their text and as a second exercise, the student was asked to find words with which they could rewrite an article that referred to topics of school or city interest.

Juegos, in this section, the intention was for students to have fun with the booklet and play mental games such as Sudoku, word search, finding the differences in two pictures, among others. As a form of play-based learning.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the collection has yet to develop the *Papel y Lápiz* didactic booklets, numbers 4, 5 and 6. In these didactic booklets, the themes will be worked on as follows: the fourth edition works on the theme of Social Commitment. The fifth analyses the Quality of life of both the environment, the school, and the city. Finally, the sixth edition refers to how to learn to express yourself both orally and in writing, to achieve consensus and practice active listening and assertive communication, seeking understanding with others and learning to communicate.

Reflections

Social relevance of the research

The goal of an investigation like *Papel y Lápiz* is to create students with a critical and analytical sense that have the freedom to express themselves, develop their capacity for interaction and symbolic production, their capacity to feel the other, to reflect on the world and their ability to transmit all this to others (Thompson J, 1998).

Thompson J's approaches, reflected in the *Papel y lápiz* project, are also articulated with the essential purposes of educommunication, and with the research carried out in EIs in Cartagena, which are expressed in:

- Understand communication in education and the role of being trainers in communication processes.
- Recognize the importance of communicability in any training and knowledge process.
- Being aware of the processes of communicational entropy in education, understanding this as the loss of communication or as a rupture of the processes of meaning within the training process.
- Being able to relate the teaching/learning process with specific edu-communicational needs in organizations.
- Doing searches and have real experiences of pedagogical mediation and mediation with culture.

All the above is the *Papel y lápiz* research project, which integrates and articulates the work of educators with social communicators, is based on the premise that teaching media in schools is a key element for the comprehensive training of students. A training that not only seeks to teach ways of reading the media, but by equipping, guiding, and training to citizenship. This training helps students to go beyond the classroom and read other narratives based on their environment and context (Mendoza, 2021). Students can achieve new meanings and reach new horizons to understand their role in society, different or new ways to being young and the relationships they build with others from their educational space and their social environment.

For teachers, it implies serving as a mediator in specific experiences of Educommunication and proposing alternatives for cultural mediation and pedagogical mediation in particular cases and circumstances. Lastly, for the parents, it is their choice to be key actors in the communicative education process, through the media they receive, so that they learn to guide the consumption of media in the family, as well as to strengthen the relationship with their children from whom they can also learn about the use and didactics of digital and audiovisual tools. It will be a two-way learning process.

Conclusions

The *Papel y lápiz* proposal of the Prensa Escuela project of the newspaper *El Universal*, with the participation of the Communication and Education Research *Semillero* (Seedbed) of the Social Communication program of the

UTB, is a pedagogical strategy that has been developed with other entities that handle the subject of media and school in Cartagena - Colombia, carrying out joint workshops with local media such as El Universal through its *Prensa-escuela* program, in coordination with the District Education Secretariat have allowed us to reach public institutions in Cartagena.

As it is an investigation that intends to cover all public institutions in Cartagena, the work has been done gradually, starting with those that have an agreement between the Cartagena District Department of Education and the *Prensa-escuela* program of the newspaper El Universal, with the objective of converting it into the subject "Media and school" that makes good use of free time within the schools of Cartagena and envision it in the near future as a subject that is part of the curriculum of the public institutions of Cartagena.

References

- Condo, Diego Oswaldo (2012). El aprendizaje en la Universidad. Universidad del Azuay.
- Fals Borda, Orlando (2008) El socialismo raizal y la Gran Colombia Bolivariana. Investigación Acción Participativa. Fundación Editorial El perro y la rana.
- Ferrés, Johan (1994) Televisión y Educación. Grupo Comunicar.
- Huergo, Jorge (2007). Los medios y tecnologías en educación. Universidad Nacional de la Plata.
- Martín Barbero, Jesús (2002). La educación desde la comunicación. Reconfiguraciones educativas desde el saber y el narrar. Editorial Norma.
- Mendoza, M. (2021, March 8th). Prensa escuela: El Universal es el libro de los estudiantes. Newspaper El Universal. <http://bit.ly/3CxWzJz>
- Olmos Perez, M. (2019). The Bridge is broken, how will we repair it? The articulation of the media and teaching in public education institutions. International Journal of Technology in Education and Science (IJTES), 3(1), 47-55. <https://bit.ly/42QiIgN>
- Orozco, Guillermo (Ed.) (2014). Tvmorfosis 3, Audiencias audiovisuales: consumidores en movimiento. Tintable.
- Prieto Castillo, Daniel (2006). El interaprendizaje como clave de la Educomunicación. Revista Mediaciones N. 6.
- Prieto Castillo, Daniel (2004). La Comunicación en la Educación. La Crujía. Segunda Edición.
- Thompson, J.B. (1998). Los medios y la modernidad. Una teoría de los medios de Comunicación. Paidós Ibérica. <https://bit.ly/46aJEL6>