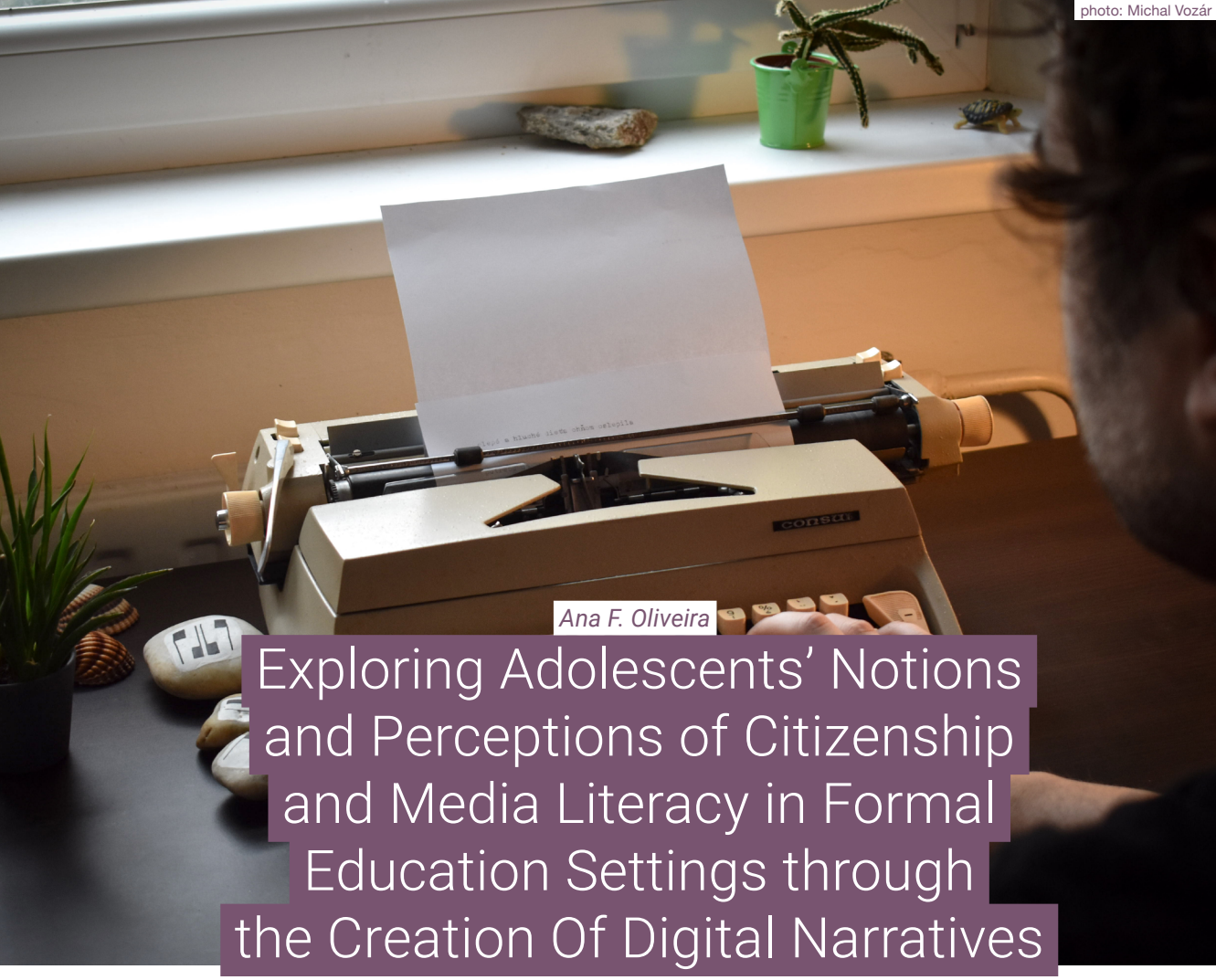

Ana F. Oliveira

Exploring Adolescents' Notions and Perceptions of Citizenship and Media Literacy in Formal Education Settings through the Creation Of Digital Narratives

ABSTRACT

Critical thinking, media literacy (MIL) and digital and creative competencies are essential for young people to thrive. School can play a fundamental role in raising awareness towards conscientious and creative media usage, particularly considering today's adolescents – Gen Z. This is not only the generation most exposed to online contents, but also the one that makes the most use of mobile media to connect, learn, express and actively engage in causes. This research conducted media production activities based on secondary school curricula to explore and promote discussions about citizenship and MIL topics. Digital narratives (DNs) creation activities were co-designed with teachers of various subjects and carried out in two Portuguese schools, involving about 190 students aged between 15 and 18. The results of the exploratory questionnaire to students and the DNs' content analysis point out that the creation of DNs acts as a lever to promote discussions about citizenship in formal settings and that, despite difficulties related to tools and basic literacies, students appreciate activities that engage them in critical reflection and transformative learning. However, the findings suggest that young people don't believe that using these languages contributes to making a change or to their voices being heard by adults and institutions.

KEY WORDS

Citizenship. Digital Narratives. Formal Education. Media Literacy. Young People.

1 Introduction

Today's media environment is marked by endless possibilities to access, build and deconstruct content, and share ideas. Critical thinking, media literacy and digital and creative competences are therefore essential for people to thrive, particularly young people. School can play a fundamental role in raising young people's awareness of using media in a proper, conscientious and creative manner. If we consider today's adolescents, members of Generation Z, it is becoming clear that this is not only the generation most exposed to the contents disseminated on the Internet,[1] but also the one that makes the most use of mobile digital media to develop and maintain connections, to express themselves and actively engage in causes[2] and to learn.[3] Several studies highlight that this generation learns in different ways as media becomes more present in all areas of their lives, learning by doing becomes a trend and informal learning spaces gain importance.[4] The school is thus challenged to integrate new practices and to value the knowledge that children and young people acquire with and through the media. Although there has been an effort in recent years to promote media literacy within school contexts, a mismatch between theory and practice has been noted – curriculum proposals frequently deviate from the goals of media education.[5]

This article focuses on the results of a PhD research that analysed the potential and tested the integration of media production activities within secondary school curricula to explore and promote discussions around citizenship and media literacy topics. By co-creating digital narratives creation activities with secondary school teachers, it aimed to promote a critical reflection on the curricula of several subjects and on the ways digital media can be used within the classroom to promote knowledge, to stimulate critical and media competencies, and to promote discussions and reflections about citizenship and the role of young people as citizens.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Creation as a Media Literacy Dimension

Since the 1990s, UNESCO has stressed that the ability to create, recreate, produce, and reproduce enables individuals to discuss and convey their views about information from the media, as well as to share their own realities.[6] Until then, and as Kafai and Peppler explore

1 PÉREZ-ESCODA, A. et al.: Fake News Reaching Young People on Social Networks: Distrust Challenging Media Literacy. In *Publications*, 2021, Vol. 9, No. 2. No pagination. [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <https://www.mdpi.com/2304-6775/9/2/24>.

2 See: JENKINS, H. et al.: *By Any Media Necessary. The New Youth Activism*. New York : New York University Press, 2016.; BENNETT, S., MATON, K., KERVIN, L.: The "Digital Natives" Debate: A Critical Review of the Evidence. In *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 2008, Vol. 39, No. 5, p. 775-786. [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2465&context=edupapers>; SEEMILLER, C., GRACE, M.: *Generation Z - A Century in the Making.* London : Routledge, 2019.

3 See also: PÉREZ-ESCODA, A., CASTRO-ZUBIZARRETA, A., FANDOS-IGADO, M.: Digital Skills in the Z Generation: Key Questions for a Curricular Introduction in Primary School. In *Comunicar,* 2016, Vol. 24, No. 49, p. 71-79. [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <https://www.revistacomunicar.com/index.php?contenido=preimpreso&doi=10.3916%2FC49-2016-07&idioma=en>.

4 See: PÉREZ-ESCODA, A., CASTRO-ZUBIZARRETA, A., FANDOS-IGADO, M.: Digital Skills in the Z Generation: Key Questions for a Curricular Introduction in Primary School. In *Comunicar,* 2016, Vol. 24, No. 49, p. 71-79. [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <https://www.revistacomunicar.com/index.php?contenido=preimpreso&doi=10.3916%2FC49-2016-07&idioma=en>.

5 PESSÔA, C.: *Educação para os Media em Contexto Escolar: investigação-ação com crianças do Ensino Básico.* [Dissertation Thesis]. Braga, Portugal : Universidade do Minho, 2017, p. 110. [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <http://repositorium.sdum.uminho.pt/handle/1822/54322>.

6 See: UNESCO: *World Declaration on Education for All.* [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <https://www.ie.uminho.pt/pt/Instituto/PublishingImages/Paginas/Nucleo-de-Educacao-para-os-Direitos-HumanosNEDHIEUM/declaracaoEducacaoTodosr.pdf>; UNESCO: *New Directions in Media Education*. [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <https://milunesco.unaoc.org/mil-resources/new-directions-in-media-education-unesco-1990/>.

in *Youth, Technology, and DIY: Developing Participatory Competencies in Creative Media Production*, the role of media production, especially in educational contexts, was an undervalued issue[7] and its contribution to learning and knowledge production was believed to be low. Today, in a *society of creation*,[8] in which digital media have great weight, new opportunities are arising for individuals, especially the younger and most connected ones, to create and share content and views, interact with peers and other individuals[9] but also to engage and gain strength in a world where they previously had few rights.[10] It is therefore argued that media production is a central part of Media Education[11] and a key element to promote a participatory culture.[12]

In the literature, various meanings are attributed to creativity. Authors such as Klimenko point out that, depending on the field of reflection, *"creativity acquires a dual importance and meaning: as a cultural value which enables effective solutions to contemporary issues to be generated and as a fundamental human need"*.[13] Therefore, whether creativity is perceived through the prism of economics and marketing[14] or through the prism of education[15] different meanings are attributed to it. From another point of view, creativity – creation – can also be understood as a characteristic that manifests itself in everyday life and reveals itself through the use of media tools. Burgess[16] suggests that this type of creation is part of everyday practices, using the concept of *vernacular creativity* to describe the documenting and sharing of everyday life, experiences that have taken on new forms in the course of the growth of the digital. She identifies, for example, the creation of family albums, storytelling or diary writing as forms of creation and creative expression that were already forms of media creation and which, due to the growth and greater availability of digital tools, have become increasingly visible, no longer restricted to the private domain, but have become dynamic elements of the cultural public sphere.[17]

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7 See: KAFAI, Y. B., PEPPLER, K.: Youth, Technology, and DIY: Developing Participatory Competencies in Creative Media Production. In *Review of Research in Education*, 2017, Vol. 35, No. 1, p. 89-119. [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <https://scholarworks.iu.edu/dspace/bitstream/handle/>.

8 See: MARTINS, V. M. T.: A qualidade da criatividade como mais valia para a educação. In *Millenium*, 2004, Vol. 9, No. 29, p. 295-312. [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/70643099.pdf>.

9 See also: GUERRERO-PICO, M., MASANET, M. J., SCOLARI, C. A.: Toward a Typology of Young Producers: Teenagers' Transmedia Skills, Media Production, and Narrative and Aesthetic Appreciation. In *New Media and Society*, 2019, Vol. 21, No. 2, p. 336-353. [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <https://repositori.upf.edu/bitstream/handle/10230/35436/Guerrero_new_towa.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.

10 See: GOLDMAN, S., BOOKER, A., MCDERMOTT, M.: Mixing the Digital, Social, and Cultural: Learning, Identity, and Agency in Youth Participation. In BUCKINGHAM, D. (ed.): *Youth, Identity, and Digital Media.* The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Series on Digital Media and Learning. Cambridge, MA : The MIT Press, 2008, p. 185-206. [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <http://sed.ucsd.edu/files/2015/02/2008-Goldman-Booker_McDermott.pdf>.

11 See: BUCKINGHAM, D.: *Media Education: Literacy, Learning, and Contemporary Culture*. Malden, MA : Polity, 2003.

12 See also: JENKINS, H. et al.: *Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture : Media Education for the 21 Century*. Chicago, IL. : MacArthur, 2006.; PEREIRA, S.: *Crianças, Jovens e Media na Era Digital: Consumidores e Produtores?* Braga : UMinho Editora, 2021. [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <https://ebooks.uminho.pt/index.php/uminho/catalog/view/45/80/891-3>.

13 KLIMENKO, O.: La creatividad como un desafío para la educación del siglo XXI. In *Educación y Educadores*, 2008, Vol. 11, No. 2, p. 194. [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <https://educacionyeducadores.unisabana.edu.co/index.php/eye/article/view/740/822>.

14 See: THROSBY, D.: *Economics and Culture*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2001.; HOWKINS, J.: *The Creative Economy: How People Make Money From Ideas*. London : Allen Lane, 2001; FLORIDA, R.: *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life.* New York : Basic Books, 2002.

15 See also: CRAFT, A.: *Creativity in Schools: Tensions and Dilemmas*. London : Routledge, 2005; CRAFT, A., JEFFREY, B., LEIBLING, M.: *Creativity in Education*. London : Continuum, 2001.

16 BURGESS, J.: *Vernacular Creativity, Cultural Participation and New Media Literacy : Photography and the Flickr Network.* Paper presented at AoIR 7.0: Internet Convergences. Brisbane, presented on 28-30th September 2006.

17 BURGESS, J.: *Vernacular Creativity, Cultural Participation and New Media Literacy : Photography and the Flickr Network.* Paper presented at AoIR 7.0: Internet Convergences. Brisbane, presented on 28-30th September 2006.

According to authors, such as Buckingham and Reia-Batista, the relationship between media literacy and media production is inherent. To educate for media use and consumption means to educate for a competent and conscious authorship of media contents.[18] It also implies the interpretation and production of media, whether they are texts in written or visual format.[19] In this context, and because it is a broad idea, media creativity can be understood either as the most complex and professionalised media production or as a simple act of writing an email, posting a text or image on social networks, or even participating in online discussions or games.[20] Based on the concept of media literacy proposed by the OFCOM, Buckingham and team[21] suggest some general features to detail what is contemplated within this dimension of creation. According to the authors, it deals with the notion that media can be used as a means of communication and self-expression; it can contribute to the development of critical understanding of reality and media; it can be perceived through practices and products. These features suggest that the creation dimension concerns how media can be employed as tools to both make different readings of the world and to design products that allow individuals to communicate, express themselves and participate.[22]

In terms of purposes, media creation is the dimension that promotes the valorisation of the youngest's' cultural knowledge, having an impact on their learning and self-esteem.[23] It is, also, the dimension that inspires them to express (and find ways to express) on social issues, with their peers or adults,[24] and a way to share their voice on a variety of platforms.[25] Alongside this, it is the dimension that drives a better understanding of the ways and reasons why media and media content are created,[26] in a process reflecting on the role of media in society, that incites media use and critical thinking.

According to Lopes, the current multimedia societies and environment require citizens to be more *"proactive, critical and participatory"*.[27] Developing these media creation skills is also a way to empower citizens, encouraging a more critical reading of the world and the content disseminated by the media.[28] Leurs and team[29] even mention that participation is a goal

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18 See: REIA-BATISTA, V.: Literacia dos Media como Resultado de Multi-Aprendizagens Multiculturais e Multimediáticas. In MIRANDA, G. (eds.): *Ensino online e aprendizagem multimédia*. Lisbon : Relógio d'Água Editores, 2009, p. 1-16.

19 BUCKINGHAM, D.: *Media Education: Literacy, Learning, and Contemporary Culture*. Malden, MA : Polity, 2003, p. 49.

20 See: BUCKINGHAM, D. et al.: *The Media Literacy of Children and Young People: A Review of the Research Literature on Behalf of Ofcom.* London : OFCOM, 2005.

21 Ibidem.

22 See: PEREIRA, S.: *Crianças, Jovens e Media na Era Digital: Consumidores e Produtores?* Braga : UMinho Editora, 2021. [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <https://ebooks.uminho.pt/index.php/uminho/catalog/view/45/80/891-3>.

23 See: BURN, A., DURRAN, J.: *Media Literacy in Schools: Practice, Production and Progression*. London : SAGE Publications, 2007.

24 See also: FRIEZEM, E.: A Story of Conflict and Collaboration: Media Literacy, Video Production and Disadvantaged Youth. In *Journal of Media Literacy Education*, 2014, Vol. 6, No. 1, p. 44-55. [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1140&context=jmle>.

25 See: TOMÉ, V. et al.: Active Citizenship and Participation Through the Media: A Community Project Focused on Pre-school and Primary School Children. In *Comunicação e Sociedade,* 2019, Vol. 36, p. 101-120. [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <https://revistacomsoc.pt/index.php/revistacomsoc/article/view/2347/2480>.

26 See: REIA-BATISTA, V.: Literacia dos Media como Resultado de Multi-Aprendizagens Multiculturais e Multimediáticas. In MIRANDA, G. (eds.): *Ensino online e aprendizagem multimédia*. Lisbon : Relógio d'Água Editores, 2009, p. 1-16.; BRENNAN, K., MONROY-HERNÁNDEZ, A., RESNICK, M.: Making Projects, Making Friends: Online Community as Catalyst for Interactive Media Creation. In *New Directions for Youth Development*, 2010, Vol. 128, p. 75-83.

27 LOPES, P.: *Literacia mediática e cidadania. Práticas e competências de adultos em formação na Grande Lisboa*. [Dissertation Thesis]. Lisbon, Portugal : ISCTE - IUL (Instituto Universitário de Lisboa), 2013, p. 169.

28 See: SHARE, J.: *Media Literacy is Elementary - Teaching Youth to Criticaly Read and Create Media*. New York : Peter Lang Publishing, 2009.

29 See: LEURS, K. et al.: Critical Media Literacy Through Making Media: A Key to Participation for Young Migrants? In *Communications*, 2018, Vol. 43, No. 3, p. 427-450. [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/commun-2018-0017/html>.

of media literacy, referring to the individual's ability to choose to participate in the knowledge economy, democracy, lifelong learning, cultural expressive activities and personal fulfilment. For this reason, they emphasise visual media production, critical engagement, and critical awareness as key elements in a plural concept of media literacy education.[30]

While it cannot be considered the salvation for an era defined by profound evolutions and transformations such as the one we live in, the literature leaves clear clues that suggest that the creation dimension is essential for the expression and full participation of individuals in society and democracy,[31] especially the youngest ones. Pereira in *Children, Youth and Media in the Digital Age: Consumers and Producers?*[32] discusses the importance of developing expression skills (creation and production) so that democratic participation in and through the media takes place; the author also stresses that for that to happen, more than knowing the technological tools that allow to produce and create, the ethical issues that underlie production and that concern knowing how to be and publish in the – increasingly digital – public space must be understandable to different audiences. Media creativity stands out, then, as a driving force for social transformation, a key competence ensuring that *"all citizens may actively participate in the construction of alternatives"*.[33]

2.2 Youth and Participation in the Digital Era

Citizenship implies the assignment of rights and duties to individuals. Therefore, the concept denotes the *"ethics of participation"*,[34] as it entails *"social interaction and participation in community life"*.[35] According to Bordenave, participation concerns the act of *"taking part, being part or having part"*.[36] It also mirrors the commitment, involvement, presence[37] of people or an individual to public life or to their community(ies),[38] and may take various forms. Magalhães and Moral[39] suggest a distinction between conventional and non-conventional forms of participation. In conventional modes they include actions, such as voting and collaborating with parties; as non-conventional acts of participation they point to participation in demonstrations or even collaboration with voluntary associations or organisations. Brites[40] also proposes a differentiation

[30] See: LEURS, K. et al.: Critical Media Literacy Through Making Media: A key to Participation for Young Migrants? In *Communications*, 2018, Vol. 43, No. 3, p. 427-450. [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/commun-2018-0017/html>.

[31] SEFTON-GREEN, J.: *Mapping Digital Makers: A Review Exploring Everyday Creativity, Learning Lives and the Digital.* [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <http://www.julianseftongreen.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/NT-SoA-6-FINAL.pdf>.

[32] PEREIRA, S.: *Crianças, Jovens e Media na Era Digital: Consumidores e Produtores?* Braga : UMinho Editora, 2021. [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <https://ebooks.uminho.pt/index.php/uminho/catalog/view/45/80/891-3>.

[33] KLIMENKO, O.: La creatividad como un desafío para la educación del siglo XXI. In *Educación y Educadores*, Vol. 11, No. 2, p. 192. [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <https://educacionyeducadores.unisabana.edu.co/index.php/eye/article/view/740>.

[34] NEVES, B.: Cidadania Digital? Das cidades digitais a Barack Obama. Uma abordagem crítica. In MORGAGO, I. S., ROSAS, A. (eds.): *Cidadania Digital*. Covilhã : LabCom Books, 2010, p. 145.

[35] Ibidem.

[36] BORDENAVE, J:. *O que é participação*. São Paulo : Brasiliense, 1983, p. 23.

[37] DEMO, P.: *Participação é conquista: noções de política social participativa*. São Paulo : Cortez, 1996, p. 19-20.

[38] See: RIBEIRO, A. B., MENEZES, I.: Os Jovens e a Internet : novos meios de participação cívica e política. In *Sociedades desiguais e paradigmas em confronto: livro de actas do X Congresso Luso-Afro- Brasileiro de Ciências Sociais*. Braga : Universidade do Minho, 2009, p.127-132.

[39] See: MAGALHÃES, P., MORAL, J. S.: *Os jovens e a política: Um estudo do Centro de Sondagens e Estudos de Opinião da Universidade Católica Portuguesa*. Lisbon : Cesop, 2008, p. 1-52.

[40] BRITES, M. J.: *O papel das notícias na construção da participação cívica e política dos jovens em Portugal: Estudo de caso longitudinal (2010-2011).* [Dissertation Thesis]. Lisbon : Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2013, p. 23-24. [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <https://run.unl.pt/handle/10362/10383>.

between conventional and unconventional participation, with *"actions such as voting, being part of a political organization, participating in party actions, associating the decisions of a community or a country with politicians"* fitting within the first category.[41] The author portrays, in turn, unconventional participation as *"actions, such as participating in voluntary organisations or associations, in blogs or other online pages, in demonstrations, in illegal protest activities, helping the community, artistic manifestations"*.[42] Crowley and Moxon advocate a simpler reading, referring that if traditional participation is voting, membership in a political party or engagement with a formal political process, an alternative form is anything other than this.[43] The authors share the idea that although alternative forms of participation are often described as new, they are not always so, such as demonstrations, volunteering and community activism.

Communication is at the basis of participation processes. Although the relationship is not guaranteed, in current contexts the link between media and democracy is even more relevant, since the internet and digital platforms provide great spaces for political participation,[44] allowing decision-makers and political elites to connect to citizens[45] and to create opportunities to include marginalized or more distant groups, such as young people, in democratic processes.[46] Buckingham even stresses that media is inevitable in modern life and for democracy, since *"a healthy democracy requires media users to be well informed and capable of discernment; it needs active citizens participating in civil society; it needs skilled and creative workers"*.[47]

For a long time, younger generations found themselves excluded from mainstream notions of citizenship. Young people were described as disconnected from political life and duties, their skills, knowledge and interest in social and political issues were doubted,[48] and access to the public sphere was barred on the basis of arguments, such as immaturity, inability to reason and even to express themselves in discussions.[49] Despite the disbelief in the role and interest of young people in political life, there are signs in the literature that underline their involvement in civic issues and in the processes of change in contemporary society. In the second half of the 20th century, specifically in the 1960s and 1970s, student movements

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41 See: BRITES, M. J.: *O papel das notícias na construção da participação cívica e política dos jovens em Portugal: Estudo de caso longitudinal (2010-2011).* [Dissertation Thesis]. Lisbon : Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2013. [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <https://run.unl.pt/handle/10362/10383>.

42 Ibidem, p. 23.

43 CROWLEY, A., MOXON, D.: *New and Innovative Forms of Youth Participation in Decision-making Processes.* [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/new-and-innovative-forms-of-youth-participation-in-decision-making-pro/1680759e6a>.

44 See: DAHLGREN, P.: *The Political Web. Media, Participation and Alternative Media*. London : Palgrave McMillan, 2013.

45 See: DELLI CARPINI, M. X.: Gen.com: Youth, Civic Engagement, and the New Information Environment. In *Political Communication*, 2000, Vol. 17, No. 4, p. 341-349. [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <https://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1350&context=asc_papers>.

46 See also: RIBEIRO, A. B., MENEZES, I.: Os Jovens e a Internet : novos meios de participação cívica e política. In *Sociedades desiguais e paradigmas em confronto: livro de actas do X Congresso Luso-Afro-Brasileiro de Ciências Sociais*. Braga : Universidade do Minho, 2009, p.127-132.

47 BUCKINGHAM, D.: *After the Death of Childhood. Growing up in the Age of Electronic Media.* Cambridge : Polity Press/Blackwell Publishing, 2000, p. 18.

48 BARBER, T.: 'Choice, Voice and Engagement'. An Exploration of Models and Methods which Promote Active Youth Citizenship in the New Europe. In DOLEJSIOVA, D., LOPEZ, M. A. G. (eds.): *European Citizenship - In the Process of Construction - Challenges for Citizenship, Citizenship Education and Democratic Practice in Europe*. [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/47261662/Choicex_Voice_and_Engagem.pdf/64fbc475-df02-4455-935a-d85f5661544b>.

49 See: LOADER, B. D., VROMEN, A., XENOS, M. A.: Performing for the Young Networked Citizen? Celebrity Politics, Social Networking and the Political Engagement of Young People. In *Media, Culture and Society*, 2016, Vol. 38, No. 3, p. 400-419. [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/284273880_Performing_for_the_young_networked_citizen_Celebrity_politics_social_networking_and_the_political_engagement_of_young_people>; PASCAL, C., BERTRAM, T.: Listening to Young Citizens: The Struggle to Make Real a Participatory Paradigm in Research with Young Children. In *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 2009, Vol. 17, No. 2, p. 249-262.

called for social transformation. Young people mobilised in large demonstrations and protests to defend social causes, to contest more and better rights and to demand the end of armed conflicts.[50] The struggles led by student movements were repeated in the decades that followed. Currently, ecology, sustainability, human and animal rights are some of the causes young people demonstrate for,[51] organising themselves in social movements, especially mobilised through digital platforms, opting for non-traditional (or unconventional) models of participation.[52] In opposition to the idea that there is a generalised disinterest and alienation of younger citizens from democratic participation,[53] counterarguments emerge suggesting that what is happening is a disinterest of these generations in mainstream forms of participation.

Several studies developed at the European level focus on these issues. The *European Youth in 2016 – Special Eurobarometer* study by the European Parliament reports that although young Europeans believed that voting in European elections was the best way to actively live European citizenship, there were other ways of participating that they considered important, such as participating in debates through the European institutions' digital platforms (21%), taking part in demonstrations (19%) and associations or NGOs (18%), or even getting involved in citizens' initiatives (17%). Data from *Flash Eurobarometer 455* showed that the trend was continuing, highlighting an increase in young people's involvement in electoral participation and volunteering actions. More than half of the nearly 11,000 young Europeans aged 15-30 surveyed – youth and young adults – reported having participated in an election in the previous 3 years and being involved in groups or organisations, and 31% had been involved in volunteering activities in the previous year. However, national results from the *Eu Kids Online* project and the *Transmedia Literacy* project pointed in a different direction. In both cases, the children and young people involved in the projects – who were aged between 6 and 19 – reported using the media preferably for leisure activities, or to communicate with family and friends or visit social networks. The data collected show higher consumption values, compared to production and participation.[54] These findings indicate that, although it is not possible to generalise and assume that all young people participate in civic and political activities and/or seek alternative ways to do so – since within the same youth group distinct practices and interests are found -, youth participation has been taking on more fluid, creative and less institutionalised forms.[55] In *By any Media Necessary*, Jenkins speaks of a generation engaging in new forms of political

[50] See: GARCIA, A. D., MACEDO, E., QUEIRÓS, J.: Routes of Construction of Knowledge, Expression and Participation: How Do Young People (Re)create Citizenship? In *Praxis Educativa*, 2019, Vol. 14, No. 3, p. 1230-1250.

[51] See also: BRIGGS, J.: *Young People and Political Participation. Teen Players*. London : Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.

[52] See: GARCIA, A. D., MACEDO, E., & QUEIRÓS, J.: Routes of Construction of Knowledge, Expression and Participation: How Do Young People (Re)create Citizenship? In *Praxis Educativa*, 2019, Vol. 14, No. 3, p. 1230-1250.

[53] See: PONTES, A. I., HENN, M., GRIFFITHS, M. D.: Youth Political (Dis)engagement and the Need for Citizenship Education: Encouraging Young People's Civic and Political Participation through the Curriculum. In *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*, 2019, Vol. 14, No. 1, p. 3-21. [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1746197917734542>.

[54] See: PEREIRA, S. et al.: Media Uses and Production Practices: Case Study with Teens from Portugal, Spain and Italy. In *Comunicación y Sociedad*, 2018, Vol. 15, No. 33, p. 89-114. [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <http://www.comunicacionysociedad.cucsh.udg.mx/index.php/comsoc/article/view/7091/599>; PONTE, C., BATISTA, S.: *EU Kids Online Portugal - Usos, competências, riscos e mediações da internet reportados por crianças e jovens (9 - 17 anos).* [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <http://fabricadesites.fcsh.unl.pt/eukidsonline/wp-content/uploads/sites/36/2019/03/RELATO%CC%81RIO-FINAL-EU-KIDS-ONLINE.docx.pdf>.

[55] See: GARCIA, A. D., MACEDO, E., QUEIRÓS, J.: Routes of Construction of Knowledge, Expression and Participation: How Do Young People (Re)create Citizenship? In *Praxis Educativa*, 2019, Vol. 14, No. 3, p. 1230-1250.; BANAJI, S., MORENO-ALMEIDA, C.: Politicizing Participatory Culture at the Margins: The Significance of Class, Gender and Online Media for the Practices of Youth Networks in the MENA Region. In *Global Media and Communication*, 2020. [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1742766520982029>.

participation. Drawing on examples such as the Occupy Wall Street movement and others that marked the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century, Jenkins et al.[56] analyse organisations and communities whose alternative practices of democratic engagement have been captivating younger sections of society. The authors conclude that digital media have played a crucial role in these dynamics, contributing to the expression of social movements and the young people who are part of them and to the creation of media content as a way of participating. *"These young people seek to change the world through any media necessary."*,[57] they state.

The opportunities for expression and participation arising from digital media are also recognised by other authors. Crowley and Maxon[58] explain that, alongside actions, such as volunteering and face-to-face protests, young people tend to express themselves more through digital platforms, in the form of online activism, and that these (collective) actions are important to shape their political identity. Bennet et al.[59] add that digital spaces have also contributed to young people developing social awareness and the ability to develop solutions to face worldly challenges. In turn, Harris, Wyn and Younes point out that many young people, despite their social and political concerns, shy away from traditional forms of participation because they do not feel heard by institutions. Not neglecting the importance of the collective movement, they refer, many young people assume individualized practices of participation, valuing their voice as individual beings, and not being guaranteed participants in activist or protest movements.[60]

Taking into consideration Crowley and Moxon's reminder of the risk of generalising the positive contributions of digital media to participation and overlooking youngsters that aren't studying or working, others with communication or learning difficulties, or with conditioned access to digital tools and the Internet,[61] the literature highlights the importance of digital media to promote young people's active engagement in democracy. By providing new forms for expression, that go beyond demonstrations of engagement in the physical world[62] and that facilitate interaction and inclusion with peers with similar interests,[63] digital media have driven the emergence of new modes of social engagement.[64] Young people have discovered new ways to have and express their voice.

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56 See: JENKINS, H. et al.: *Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21 Century*. Chicago, IL : MacArthur, 2006.

57 JENKINS, H. et al.: *By any Media Necessary. The New Youth Activism*. New York : New York University Press, 2016, p. 9.

58 CROWLEY, A., MOXON, D.: *New and Innovative Forms of Youth Participation in Decision-making Processes*. [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/new-and-innovative-forms-of-youth-participation-in-decision- making-pro/1680759e6a>.

59 See: BENNETT, L. B. et al.: At Home in the World: Supporting Children in Human Rights, Global Citizenship, and Digital Citizenship. In *Childhood Education*, 2016, Vol. 93, No. 3, p. 189-199. [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/301646014_At_Home_in_the_World_Supporting_Children_in_Human_Rights_Global_Citizenship_and_Digital_Citizenship>.

60 HARRIS, A., WYN, J., YOUNES, S.: Beyond Apathetic or Activist Youth: 'Ordinary' Young People and Contemporary Forms of Participation. In *Young*, 2010, Vol. 18, No. 1, p. 29.

61 CROWLEY, A., MOXON, D.: *New and Innovative Forms of Youth Participation in Decision-making Processes.* [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/new-and-innovative-forms-of-youth-participation-in-decision- making-pro/1680759e6a>.

62 See: DAHYA, N.: Critical Perspectives on Youth Digital Media Production: 'Voice' and Representation in Educational Contexts. In *Learning, Media and Technology*, 2017, Vol. 42, No. 1, p. 100-111. [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/294720890_Critical_perspectives_on_youth_digital_media_production_%27voice%27_and_representation_in_educational_contexts>.

63 See: BRIGGS, J.: *Young People and Political Participation. Teen Players*. London : Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.; LUVIZOTTO, C. K.: Cidadania, ativismo e participação na internet: experiências brasileiras. In *Comunicação e Sociedade*, 2016, Vol. 30, p. 297-312. [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <https://revistacomsoc.pt/index.php/revistacomsoc/article/view/820/800>.

64 See: JENKINS, H. et al.: *By any Media Necessary. The New Youth Activism*. New York : New York University Press, 2016.; JENKINS, H.: *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide.* New York, London : New York University Press, 2006.; JENKINS, H.: *Fans, Bloggers, and Gamers: Exploring Participatory Culture*. New York : New York University Press, 2006.

2.3 Media Literacy in Schools

Eccles and Roeser consider school to be an essential place for the development of individuals. It is the place where they acquire knowledge, where they create and nurture social relationships, where they shape their identities and where they prepare themselves to face the future.[65] It is also the place where young people spend much of their time, learning to make critical readings of the world, to communicate and to acquire skills that give them the necessary tools to act in the places where they live.[66]

In a time of rapid and profound changes, largely affected by the Internet boom and the growth of digital media, school faces several challenges. D'Oliveira Martins and colleagues, in a guide document developed for the particular Portuguese context, point out that the fast pace at which scientific and technological knowledge evolves and the transformations in the way knowledge is produced imposes a need for a reconfiguration of school. Considering these aspects, as a primary space for learning and acquiring skills, school is under pressure to adapt to the demands of the digital age.[67]

The urgency to readjust the school context and pedagogical practices is the topic of interest for other authors. Gutiérrez and Tyner underline that school cannot ignore social and cultural evolutions, since in doing so, it risks *"training students to develop as people and citizens in a society that no longer exists"*.[68] They add that the digitalization of information, the importance of social networks and digital media, and even multiculturalism are issues that are little addressed in school. This promotes a gap between the reality experienced and what is learned in the classroom.[69] Pérez Tornero expresses a similar concern noting that in a context – such as the current one – in which the media have an undeniable weight in everyone's lives, school is no longer the main holder of knowledge and intellectual power; this responsibility is shared with the media.[70] With the growth of the Internet and, more recently, with the massification of digital media, access to knowledge that was previously only transmitted in the classroom has become possible with a few clicks. In view of this, Tornero underlines that *"the school is running out of classrooms, that is, out of closed, controlled and reserved spaces, in which knowledge flowed vertically from the teacher to the students"*.[71] In line with these authors, García-Ruiz and Pérez-Escoda also stress that the Internet posed unprecedented opportunities for education and for the development of new ways to teach and learn. According to them, we are hyperconnected citizens, who share knowledge through the Internet, and who resort to multiple languages and media to learn and disseminate learnings by all. By perceiving, analysing and producing messages that are conveyed in different media, citizens guarantee their fundamental rights. It is therefore important to favour the development of these skills in the school

[65] See: ECCLES, J. S., ROESER, R. W.: Schools as Development Contexts. In ADAMS, G. R., BERZONSKY, M. D. (eds.): *Blackwell Handbook of Adolescence*. Oxford : Blackwell Publishing, 2006.

[66] See: LOPES, P.: Educação para os media nas sociedades multimediáticas. In *CIES E-Working Paper*, 2011, Vol. 108, p. 1-30. [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <https://core.ac.uk/reader/54050680>; SILVEIRA, P.: A Educação para os Media: uma abordagem teórica acerca do conceito e da sua aplicação no contexto educativo. In PEREIRA, S. (ed.): *Congresso Nacional "Literacia, Media e Cidadania"*. Braga : Universidade do Minho: Centro de Estudos de Comunicação e Sociedade, 2011, p. 797-809.

[67] D'OLIVEIRA MARTINS, G. et al.: *Perfil dos Alunos à saída da Escolaridade Obrigatória*. [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <https://dge.mec.pt/sites/default/files/Curriculo/Projeto_Autonomia_e_Flexibilidade/perfil_dos_alunos.pdf>.

[68] GUTIÉRREZ, A., TYNER, K.: Educación para los medios, alfabetización mediática y competencia digital. In *Comunicar*, 2012, Vol. 38, p. 32. [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/307676102_Educacion_para_los_medios_alfabetizacion_mediatica_y_competencia_digital_Media_Education_Media_Literacy_and_Digital_Competence>.

[69] Ibidem, p. 31-39.

[70] PÉREZ TORNERO, J. M.: *Comunicação e Educação na Sociedade da Informação: Novas linguagens e consciência crítica.* Porto : Porto Editora, 2000, p. 39.

[71] Ibidem.

context.[72] These authors underline the important contribution of the media both as knowledge tools and as citizenship tools, suggesting that its integration in the educational dynamics is fundamental to promote the emancipation of children and young people facing the challenges that arise from the media environment, and also to encourage their participation, civic attitude and to develop the awareness of their rights and duties.[73]

Media Education actively contributes to the empowerment and capacity building of individuals to be more resilient and enlightened citizens. Hobbs and colleagues[74] point out that through media activities students develop analytical and communication, leadership and problem-solving skills and learn to use different sources and media, something extremely relevant in today's deeply mediatised context. According to the authors, as citizens are expected to be both (media) readers and writers and to engage in discussions and debates to promote action and change in their communities, it is crucial that the very role of media in democratic societies is understood - both how knowledge is constructed and how knowledge production is related to social, political and economic specificities. As they state, by fostering digital and media literacy in formal and informal learning contexts - both in terms of media analysis and creation - opportunities are created for children and young people to reflect on their uses of media and technology, to analyse and evaluate media messages, and to create dynamic and collaborative works that support their civic engagement. It is therefore a matter of taking advantage of the school space to promote space for democracy, with and through the media, where young people take on different roles, stimulating plurality of thought and active responsibility.

3 Methodology

This research sought answers to *"How can media content production practices – namely digital narratives - be integrated in the classroom, based on the curricula and aiming to contribute to expression and reflection on citizenship issues"*. It particularly aimed to understand how media literacy's creative dimension can be promoted in the classroom, based on curriculum themes and to understand how creation and production activities, specifically of digital narratives, can contribute to young people's participation and to their citizenship practices and perceptions.

To answer the research questions and objectives defined, but also considering the context and target audience under study – school and young people – an action research was designed. As it is a methodology that favours collaboration between researcher and participants, promotes a critical and reflective attitude, and is self-evaluative and interventive,[75] it presented itself as the methodological option most suited to the stipulated objectives. The research was divided into three phases: diagnosis, intervention, and reflection and evaluation. In this article, we focus on the results obtained during the intervention phase, through the exploratory questionnaire presented to the students who participated in the media creation activities and the content analysis of the narratives created. The data was analysed also considering the participatory observation. The fieldwork was conducted in two Portuguese schools – one public and one private school. The data regarding the schools is available in TABLE 1.

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[72] GARCÍA-RUIZ, R., PÉREZ ESCODA, A.: Empoderar a la ciudadanía mediante la educación en medios digitales. In *Hamut´ay*, 2019, Vol. 6, No. 2. No pagination. [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <http://revistas.uap.edu.pe/ojs/index.php/HAMUT/article/view/1771/1796>.

[73] See: PÉREZ TORNERO, J. M.: *Comunicação e Educação na Sociedade da Informação: Novas linguagens e consciência crítica.* Porto : Porto Editora, 2000.

[74] HOBBS, R. et al.: Learning to Engage: How Positive Attitudes About the News, Media Literacy, and Video Production Contribute to Adolescent Civic Engagement. In *Educational Media International*, 2013, Vol. 50, No. 4, p. 232.

[75] See: AMADO, J.: *Manual de investigação qualitativa em educação*. Coimbra : Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra, 2014; COHEN, L., MANION, L., MORRISON, K.: *Research Methods in Education.* New York : Routledge, 2011.

School 1
Public school
Activities conducted in 5 classes
10th and 11th grade students
3 teachers (Portuguese, Spanish and English)
118 students
School 2
Private school
Activities conducted in 3 classes
10th and 12th grade students
2 teachers (Portuguese and Philosophy/Citizenship)
79 students

TABLE 1: *Data about the two schools and audiences involved in the project*

Source: own processing, 2021.

To get to know the students, an exploratory questionnaire was applied. This method was chosen since, usually, it assures the criteria of safeguarding the anonymity of the respondents (in this case, mostly minors) and the possibility of aggregation and confrontation of data concerning individuals moving in similar contexts.[76] The questionnaire was distributed in the first session with each class. The instrument was divided into three blocks, with a total of 16 questions (13 closed questions and 3 open questions) and sought to provide a general description of the population under study, their habits and experience with the media and citizenship practices. A total of 197 questionnaires were applied in eight secondary school classes.

The data collected through the questionnaires was analysed using SPSS – version 24. The analysis was mainly quantitative and focused on socio-demographic data and others concerning media habits and creation, production and participation routines. Descriptive statistics was conducted to analyse the data distribution and dispersion, since the aim was to obtain a general picture of the students and each of the classes that participated in the project.

The analysis of the digital narratives created in the classroom pursued on the one hand, to extract all relevant information and, on the other hand, to interpret the data to understand their implications and meanings for the research.[77] The objective was to comprehend if young people understood the concept of digital narrative; used diversified multimodal elements to create dynamic, coherent and appealing messages; lived a process of learning and reflecting on citizenship issues through the creation of digital narratives; reflected on the role and impact of media in our lives and in citizenship; were able to create media products as a way to express their views, voices and opinions. As narrative is a semiotic product where the art of telling stories is combined with multimedia elements, such as images, audio and video,[78] a content analysis was carried out. Considering the multiplicity of elements that interact in a digital narrative - image, text, audio and video[79] - and the variety of skills involved in its creation, an analysis

[76] See also: ALMEIDA, J. F., PINTO, J. M.: *A Investigação nas Ciências Sociais*. Lisbon : Editorial Presença, 1995.

[77] LANKSHEAR, C., KNOBEL, M.: *New Literacies Everyday Practices and Classroom Learning*. [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007/978-981-287-588-4_111>.

[78] ROBIN, B. R.: *The Educational Uses of Digital Storytelling*. [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <https://digitalstorytelling.coe.uh.edu/articles/Educ-Uses-DS.pdf>.

[79] See: HAMILTON, A. et al.: Digital Storytelling as a Tool for Fostering Reflection. In *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad,* 2019, Vol. 31, No. 1, p. 59-73. [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341138803_Digital_Storytelling_as_a_Tool_for_Fostering_Reflection>; LAMBERT, J.: *Digital Storytelling Cookbook.* Berkeley : Center for Digital Storytelling. Digital Diner Press, 2010; LAMBERT, J.: *Digital Storytelling: Capturing Lives, Creating Community*. New York : Routledge, 2012; OHLER, J.: *Digital Storytelling in the Classroom: New Media Pathways to Literacy, Learning and Creativity.* Thousand Oaks, CA : Corwin, 2013.

matrix was developed to guide and support the analysis. To build this instrument, we initially started from the concept of media literacy. The analysis models developed by Moon,[80] Alterio and McDury,[81] Lambert,[82] Ohler[83] and Barrett[84] were also considered, as well as the coding categories for the analysis of digital narratives proposed by Snelson and Sheffield[85] and Robin.[86] In this way, considering the polysemy of the concept, as previously mentioned by Lopes,[87] and the criteria developed by the abovementioned authors, the final matrix included four domains of competencies, as TABLE 2 shows, and 12 operational tasks - descriptors that specify the skills, characteristics and learning that we intended to observe through digital narratives. This instrument thus facilitated an organised and systematised collection of information to describe students' creations, performance, and learning. Ultimately, by adopting such an instrument, the data collected allowed us to ascertain the feasibility of the activities and the students' response to the challenge of creating media content from citizenship topics integrated in the curriculum. With regard to the proposed creative activities, these were co-created together with the teachers of each subject and each class that was involved in this research.

<table>
<tr><th>Media Literacy</th><th>Critical Thinking</th><th>Citizenship</th><th>Creativity</th></tr>
<tr><td>Media use</td><td>Sense creation</td><td>Point of view</td><td>Multimodal elements</td></tr>
<tr><td>Search</td><td>Meaning creation</td><td>Voice</td><td>Creativity in the production and/or content production</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Software use</td><td>Storytelling</td><td rowspan="3">Involvement and emotional content</td><td rowspan="3">Transformative learning</td></tr>
<tr><td>Story(re)telling</td></tr>
<tr><td>Story expansion</td></tr>
</table>

TABLE 2: *Operational domains and tasks that make up the content analysis matrix for digital narratives*

Source: own processing, 2021.

3 Results

In the first school, 118 pupils from 5 different classes were involved in this investigation. 24 10th year students and 94 11th year students. The students were on average 16 years old and mainly female (n=89). Most of them were studying Languages and Humanities (n=43), followed by Visual Arts (n=36) and Science and Technology (n=26). Social networks are the medium which they reported using most frequently in their daily lives, referring to use them occasionally (n=66) or whenever possible (n=50). In the school context, websites and blogs were the media which students use most, with 42 young people mentioning that they used these platforms occasionally and 70 whenever possible.

80 See: MOON, J. A.: *Reflection in Learning and Professional Practice*. Oxford : Routledge, 1999.

81 See also: ALTERIO, M., MCDRURY, J.: *Learning Through Storytelling in Higher Education.* London : Routledge, 2003.

82 See: LAMBERT, J.: *Digital Storytelling Cookbook.* Berkeley : Center for Digital Storytelling. Digital Diner Press, 2010.

83 See: OHLER, J.: *Digital Storytelling in the Classroom: New Media Pathways to Literacy, Learning and Creativity.* Thousand Oaks, CA : Corwin, 2013.

84 BARRETT, H.: *The Educational Uses of Digital Storytelling*. [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <http://digitalstorytelling.coe.uh.edu/archive/rubrics.html>.

85 See: SNELSON, C., SHEFFIELD, A.: Digital Storytelling in a Web 2.0 World. In *TCC*, 2009, p. 3930-3933. [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/276921955_Digital_Storytelling_in_a_Web_20_World>.

86 See also: ROBIN, B. R.: Digital Storytelling: A Powerful Technology Tool for the 21st Century Classroom. In *Theory into Practice*, 2008, Vol. 47, No. 3, p. 220-228. [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <https://desarrollodocente.uc.cl/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Digital_Storytelling_A_Powerful_Technology_Tool_f.pdf>.

87 See: LOPES, P.: *Literacia mediática e cidadania. Práticas e competências de adultos em formação na Grande Lisboa*. [Dissertation Thesis]. Lisbon : ISCTE - IUL (Instituto Universitário de Lisboa), 2013.

Regarding their participation habits, the adolescents referred that they were mostly involved in Associations/Cultural Movements (n=39) and in volunteer actions (n=37). To understand their previous experience with media creation, production and participation activities, the youngsters were asked about a set of activities and their accomplishment in the year prior to the completion of the questionnaire. Making a presentation using Powerpoint, Prezi or other (n=105), producing photographs (n=93) and producing and publishing/sharing photographs on a site or social network (n=91) and responding to a petition for a cause through a social network (n=89) were those which most young people reported having carried out; in contrast, writing an opinion article for a media outlet (n=2), sharing or recommending a brand or products on a social network (n=10), writing a letter to the director of a media outlet (n=11) and writing a comment on a party's website or social network (n=17) were those which fewer young people reported having carried out in the previous year. When asked about their participation in media-related initiatives promoted by the school, only 17 of 118 students reported collaborating or having already collaborated in these activities.

In the second school, 79 students, belonging to 3 classes, participated in the empirical work. The students were mainly male (n=41) and aged between 15 and 18. The average age was 16 years old. All students were studying Science and Technology, 49 were in the 10th grade and 30 in the 12th grade. When questioned about the use of media in their daily lives, the youngsters mentioned that social networks and television were the media they used most frequently – 62 said they used social networks occasionally and 74 used television occasionally. In the school context, websites and blogs are the media they used most, with 42 of the students stating that they used these media whenever possible.

When asked about their participation habits, 16 students reported participating in associations and cultural movements, 20 in voluntary work, and 15 in youth groups and religious movements. Regarding the media creation, production and participation practices carried out in the previous year, the activities mentioned by the highest number of young people were producing photographs (n=76), making a presentation using Powerpoint, Prezi or other (n=76), producing and publishing/sharing photographs on a website or social network (n=67) and responding to a petition through a social network (n=60). On the other hand, writing an opinion article for a media outlet (n=0), sharing or recommending a brand or products to friends through social networks (n=0), writing a letter to the director of a media outlet (n=2) and creating a story through a multimedia platform (n=14) were those which fewer young people reported having carried out in the previous year. Regarding the participation in activities promoted internally by the school related to Media Education, only 25 out of 79 students mentioned being or having been involved.

During the process of co-creation of the media creation activities, three main areas of work were identified – literary education, citizen expression and personal expression and individuality. Following the preparation meetings held with the Spanish teacher from school 1 and the Philosophy/Citizenship teacher from school 2, it became clear that the themes related to citizenship identified in the syllabus provided answers to more than one thematic area. Therefore, a fourth area emerged, crossing citizen expression and personal expression and individuality. As a transversal objective to all activities, it was defined, together with the teachers, that they should result in the creation of digital narratives, through a process of reflection and critical understanding about the media and specific subjects of the curricula related to citizenship.

Nine activities were carried out, as TABLE 3 shows – 3 in the scope of Literary Education, 2 in the domain of Citizen Expression, 1 in the scope of Personal experience and individuality and 3 in the area that crossed Citizen Expression / Personal experience and individuality. The content analysis of the narratives shows that the students, as young citizens, were confronted with their beliefs and opinions on current pressing issues and the role of the media as instruments for teaching and learning, but also as tools to promote and experience citizenship. The analysis was complemented with the participant observation notes.

Media Literacy	Citizen expression	Personal experience and individuality	Citizen expression/ Personal experience and individuality
School 1	School 1	School 1	School 1
1 activity | 10th grade | Portuguese	1 activity | 11th grade | English	1 activity | 11th grade | English	2 activities | 11th grade | Spanish
School 2	School 2		School 2
2 activities | 12th grade | Portuguese	1 activity | 10th grade | Philosophy/Citizenship		1 activity | 10th grade | Philosophy/Citizenship

TABLE 3: *Structures of the activities conducted according to subject area*

Source: own processing, 2021.

Most of the students appreciated the opportunity to create digital narratives in the context of various disciplines and to discuss the suggested themes, especially those addressed in the citizen expression and citizen expression/personal experience and individuality areas. The themes addressed in these subject areas aroused particular interest, causing young people to share their opinions and personal experiences and even posing new questions for discussion. For others, however, the proposed media format and the objectives of the activities were not clear; some of the students even questioned the purpose of the activities. In these cases, along with the individual interests of each young person, it is possible that the unfavourable opinions of some parents about the activities also influenced the students' attitudes.

The time factor sometimes proved to be a constraint in reaching the established objectives. Some of the dynamics were even too ambitious for the time available and inappropriate for the groups concerned. In some activities, the groups showed difficulties in organizing and managing the time available. This was the case of the 11th grade class of school 1 (public) and activity number 4 – some of the groups were not able to execute the digital narratives within the time set. In other cases, the time for discussion proved to be short. As an example, we ended the three activities carried out within the theme of citizen expression/personal experience and individuality with the feeling that it would have been essential to spend more time than planned discussing the subjects and sharing the students' opinions. Considering the discriminatory perspectives and gender differences identified in activities 7 and 8, it would have been fruitful to explore the themes further. In some situations, it was even necessary to interrupt the discussions to continue with the plan of work. In other cases, like in the activity conducted with 10th grade class of school 1 (public) within the Portuguese classroom, the short time available made evident comprehension, critical reading, and construction of contents-related difficulties. It was not possible to explore neither the themes, nor the digital narratives format, nor the proposed tools in greater depth. However, in retrospective analysis, considering the empirical work and the options taken in terms of planning, the time constraints and the need to comply with the syllabus would not allow organising the activities in any other way.

The purpose of using the media in a perspective of creation and expression was not always achieved. We perceived that the process of critical reflection and transformative learning took place from the moments of analysis and discussion promoted prior to the creative activities, but not necessarily through creation. In some cases, the use of the media was simply limited to an instrumental use and not to a use as tools of creation. We also point out that the unfamiliarity of the platforms and the media format caused hindrances to the realization of the activities. The lack of knowledge of the digital narrative format and of some of the platforms contributed to the fact that the objectives set for the activities were not always achieved. In some of the activities, the groups presented other media formats, such as reports or videos. Some young people, such as those involved in activity 4, questioned the proposed platform, mentioning that an alternative could have been used. It should be noted that this comment was only shared at the moment of presentation of the final works.

With regard to the relationship between the origin of the young people (public or private school) and the narratives/messages created, we can state that the differences between the students of the two schools are slight. As an example, we highlight the narratives created by the 11th grade Spanish students of school 1 (public) and 10th grade Citizenship students of school 2 (private), in which we focused on the themes of (cyber)bullying and hate speech. Although students from school 1 (public) showed a greater familiarity with the subject during the discussions, the students from the private school and their creations showed equal interest, concern and sensitivity towards the themes. The students recognised the importance of discussing and reflecting on the issues, demonstrating, in general, a concern with creating strong messages that would sensitise the viewer.

4 Discussion

The data collected through the exploratory questionnaire, and the content analysis of the digital narratives created – supported by notes from classroom participant observation -, allow us to underline several aspects regarding the ways media production activities based on the secondary school curricula contribute to exploring and promoting discussions about citizenship and MIL topics within the classroom. Firstly, the results of the exploratory questionnaire reveal that although we have worked in two educational settings with different educational projects and infrastructures, no significant differences were identified in the two contexts in terms of daily use of the media by the students. In general, all students reported using social networks and television more frequently, a trend already pointed out by the works cited in the literature review. Specifically, about the use of media in the school context, most of the adolescents referred to use websites and blogs more frequently to carry out schoolwork. As to their participation habits, it can be noticed that, in general, young people referred to be little involved with the activities listed. In the total of 197 young people who answered the exploratory questionnaire, 55 mentioned being involved in cultural associations/movements, 57 in volunteer actions and 30 in youth groups or religious movements. Less than 16% of young people reported being involved in the remaining activities. The data collected in this preliminary stage also revealed that although both institutions promoted more or less regular activities related to media literacy and Media Education, only 42 of 197 students said they collaborated or had collaborated in these initiatives, which corresponds to a little more than 20% (21.3%) of the total number of young people who participated in this research project.

Secondly, in relation to the digital narratives created and the results of the content analysis (analysed together with the participant observation notes), several aspects stand out. Not all young people aspire to participate, but promoting discussions and reflections on citizenship issues is key to promoting civic awareness. Contrary to the idea of a generalised disinterest of the younger generation towards political engagement and active participation in society,[88] the works analysed in the literature review describe a move away from more traditional forms of participation by young people and a greater interest in engaging in alternative forms of participation, more related to (digital) spaces.[89] The literature also evidences a rising interest in advocating for issues that do not appeal so much to the other generations, as authors, such

[88] See: PONTES, A. I., HENN, M., GRIFFITHS, M. D.: Youth Political (Dis)engagement and the Need for Citizenship Education: Encouraging Young People's Civic and Political Participation through the Curriculum. In *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*, 2019, Vol. 14, No. 1, p. 3-21. [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1746197917734542>.

[89] See: DAHYA, N.: Critical Perspectives on Youth Digital Media Production: 'Voice' and Representation in Educational Contexts. In *Learning, Media and Technology*, 2017, Vol. 42, No. 1, p. 100-111. [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/294720890_Critical_perspectives_on_youth_digital_media_production_%27voice%27_and_representation_in_educational_contexts >; CROWLEY, A., MOXON, D.: *New and Innovative Forms of Youth Participation in Decision-making Processes.* [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/new-and-innovative-forms-of-youth-participation-in-decision-making-pro/1680759e6a>.

as Briggs[90] or Garcia et al.[91] suggest. In the empirical work, we perceived that young people participate little and are little involved in participation-related activities – either in traditional or alternative ways -, something that aligns with previously developed research.[92] But the digital narratives created and the discussions that emerged from the digital creation activities suggest that when encouraged or when confronted with topics that are of interest to them, young people get involved. When they do so in spaces and contexts where they feel safe, respected, and heard, the results are even more interesting, resulting in lively and fruitful discussions.

Through the promotion of media creation and production activities (namely digital narratives) to encourage reflection and discussion on citizenship issues and students' expression through media creation and production, we noticed that production works as a lever for young people to talk, discuss and share their views on citizenship issues, especially those related to human rights, ecology and sustainability, as pointed out by other studies, as mentioned above. As Buckingham[93] suggests, only a minority of young people will be using technology to engage in civic or political participation practices, or to convey their views to audiences beyond their core networks, which involve peers and family. The promise of the participatory culture envisioned by Jenkins[94] has yet to be fulfilled.

Finally, understanding young people as social actors is crucial when it comes to reflecting on their lives. Sociology of childhood and studies on adolescence highlight that children and adolescents are social actors with capacities to act and intervene in society and that rather than replicating adult teachings, they reinterpret them.[95] This is evident in the empirical work conducted in this research where, although young people were given a voice in all the creative and production activities undertaken, there was no prior consultation to ascertain their views and interests in exploring particular themes or using particular programmes and applications. The data suggests that this may have influenced the results of some of the work - in those where there was less interest in the subjects, the discussions and the digital narratives created did not explore the adolescents' opinions and perceptions as deeply; in the activities where it was proposed to use applications and platforms that they were unfamiliar with or disliked, the creation of the digital narratives proved more difficult, both in technical terms and in terms of story design. If we cross-reference the results of the empirical work with the literature review, it becomes clear that exploring and valuing the voice of young people in these contexts, and taking advantage of the potential of digital media to the full extent, allows contributing to youth citizenship and young people's expression[96] valuing their views and, as Almeida, Ribeiro, and Rowland[97] state, esteeming their involvement in the processes that concern their present and their future.

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90 See: BRIGGS, J.: *Young People and Political Participation. Teen Players*. London : Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.

91 See also: GARCIA, A. D., MACEDO, E., QUEIRÓS, J.: Routes of Construction of Knowledge, Expression and Participation: How Do Young People (Re)create Citizenship? In *Praxis Educativa*, 2019, Vol. 14, No. 3, p. 1230-1250.

92 See: PEREIRA, S. et al.: Media Uses and Production Practices: Case Study with Teens from Portugal, Spain and Italy. In *Comunicación y Sociedad*, 2018, Vol. 0, No. 33, p. 89-114. [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <http://www.comunicacionysociedad.cucsh.udg.mx/index.php/comsoc/article/view/7091/599>.

93 See also: BUCKINGHAM, D.: Introducing Identity. In BUCKIGNHAM, D. (ed.): *Youth, Identity, and Digital Media*. Cambridge, MA : The MIT Press, 2008, p. 1-24. [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s10992-021-09605-9.pdf>.

94 See: JENKINS, H.: *Fans, Bloggers, and Gamers: Exploring Participatory Culture*. New York : New York University Press, 2006.

95 See: CORSARO, W. A.: *A Sociologia da Infância.* Porto Alegre : Artmed, 2011; SARMENTO, M. J.: Visibilidade social e Estudo da Infância. In VASCONCELLOS, V. M. R., SARMENTO, M. J. (eds.): *Infância (In)visível*. Araraquara : Junqueira e Marin, 2007; STEINBERG, L.: *Adolescence.* New York : McGraw-Hill, 2020.

96 See: BLUM-ROSS, A., LIVINGSTONE, S.: From Youth Voice to Young Entrepreneurs: The Individualization of Digital Media and Learning. In *Journal of Digital and Media Literacy,* 2016, Vol. 4, No. 1-2, p. 1-23. [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/67045/1/Blum_Ross_From%20yuoth%20voice%20to%20.pdf>.

97 ALMEIDA, A., RIBEIRO, A. S., ROWLAND, J.: *Children, Citizenship and Crisis: Towards a Participatory Agenda.* [online]. [2022-04-05]. Available at: <https://www.ics.ulisboa.pt/books/book2/ch05.pdf>.

5 Conclusion

Although we cannot generalize the results of this research, they are a useful contribution to continue placing the issues related to the promotion of Media Literacy and Media Education in the political and educational agendas, since they point out that the promotion of citizenship is closely related to them. With the empirical work, several aspects became evident. It became clear that students, despite not finding all themes, programs, or applications interesting, appreciate the possibility to discuss and share their opinions about citizenship issues and to use the media in the classroom as a way to work in more creative ways. Furthermore, and despite valuing active learning and lived experience through creation, it is also clear that teenagers do not yet perceive the creation of media content as a way to express themselves and actively participate in society. If we focus on the impact of the activities developed with the several classes, we can say that they contributed to highlighting the classroom as a space to reflect and discuss citizenship themes present in the curricula, to awaking the youngsters' civic senses and to highlighting the potential of promoting Media Education in a fluid way. As for the intention of promoting the students' expression through media creation and production, this proved to be more challenging, and was not always achieved. It became clear that young people would have liked to have had a more active role in the design of the activities, particularly in decisions regarding the subjects explored and the programs/applications/software used.

Furthermore, we would like to stress out that through a process of reflecting on the role of media in society and its impact on citizenship, the creation and production activities allowed to stimulate the understanding of the ways and reasons why media and media content are created [98] and the ways they can contribute to citizens' expression and engagement in citizenship practices. We also point out that the activities fulfilled the purpose of providing a transformative and reflective process focused on young people's experiences and learning, in line with authors, such as Reia-Baptista[99] and Burn and Durran[100] who underline media literacy as transformative and creative and the act of creating or recreating media content as a reflective and analytical process.

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