

Media Education

Subjects: **Education & Educational Research**

Contributor: Michele Domenico Todino , Stefano Di Tore

Media Education is an educational discipline focused on critical and conscious engagement with media and their languages. Regarded as complex cultural artifacts, it serves as a preparatory phase aimed at developing interpretative and critical skills regarding the media themselves. The objective is to promote a deep understanding of media as cultural and social phenomena, emphasizing that they are not merely technical tools but carriers of meanings and values that shape perceptions of reality and identity formation. This entry explores the evolution of Media Education, from the 1982 UNESCO Grünwald Declaration to recent international initiatives, highlighting the role of the Media Educator as a facilitator in integrating digital technologies into educational contexts. Key aspects include the rejection of an “apocalyptic” vision of the new media (quoting Umberto Eco), the focus on media as carriers of meaning, and the promotion of critical and creative skills essential for navigating the complexities of contemporary digital culture.

media education

media educator

educational technology

digital cultural artifacts

The central theme running throughout the article is the fundamental importance of Media Education in a world pervaded by digital media. More specifically, it transcends the mere acquisition of technical skills, emphasizing the urgent need to foster critical thinking and responsible media usage. It begins by defining Media Education as a discipline focused on critically engaging with media messages, recognizing media as cultural artifacts that shape our perceptions and identities. The article traces the historical trajectory of Media Education, highlighting the evolving role of media educators in response to technological advancements. The discussion then delves into the significance of critical engagement, stressing that Media Education must teach students to analyze media messages within their social and cultural contexts, while promoting a responsible and creative use of media. The article also examines the role of technology in educational experiences, recommending the use of SWOT analysis to evaluate the risks and opportunities associated with media. It introduces the concept of the “uncanny valley” to emphasize the importance of considering user experience in interactions with technology. Subsequently, the analysis explores communication theories, referencing McLuhan’s concept of the medium is the message. It further investigates the media socialization of children, underscoring the crucial role of parents and educators in fostering media literacy and responsible screen use. The distinctions and interconnections between media literacy and Media Education are then clarified. Media literacy focuses on the critical analysis of media messages, whereas Media Education provides pedagogical strategies for integrating media awareness into the educational process. The article also addresses the issue of the “digital divide”, highlighting how Media Education can empower older adults in the digital world, thereby promoting digital inclusion and fostering a more equitable society. Finally, the article presents key reference frameworks for media literacy, such as Tisseron’s “3-6-9-12” model and European frameworks like DigComp, which inform educational practices. It is worth noting that paragraph 9 specifically addresses the distinction between Media Literacy and Media Education, providing clarification for those who may

have doubts. For reasons of logical sequencing, this paragraph has been placed after other preliminary information on the topic of Media Education. This work aims to offer a cultural perspective on Media Education, emphasizing that it is not a novel discipline. While it is currently applied to digital media, its roots extend far back in the history of communication and communication systems. From the advent of writing, with Plato's harsh criticisms of this medium for literary or philosophical purposes—as he expressed a strong preference for live dialogue—to the emergence of radio and its associated challenges, and later to television, Media Education has always been intrinsically linked to the evolution of media technologies. In light of the points discussed in this introduction, it is important to provide a definition of Media Education. It can be defined as follows: Media Education is an educational discipline focused on critical and conscious engagement with media and their languages, regarded as complex cultural artifacts. Unlike Educational Technology, which primarily addresses the use of digital technologies to facilitate teaching and learning processes, Media Education serves as a preparatory phase aimed at developing interpretative and critical skills regarding the media themselves ^[1]. The objective is to promote a deep understanding of media as cultural and social phenomena, emphasizing that they are not merely technical tools but carriers of meanings and values that shape perceptions of reality and identity formation.

References

1. Rivoltella, P.C. *Le Dieci Tesi su Scuola e Tecnologia*. CREMIT, 2016. Available online: <https://www.cremi.it/le-dieci-tesi-scuola-tecnologia/> (accessed on 29 September 2024).

Retrieved from <https://encyclopedia.pub/entry/history/show/129292>