Editorial

Editorial: Inclusive Media Literacy Education for Diverse Societies

Çiğdem Bozdağ [1,2,*], Annamária Neag [3], and Koen Leurs [4]

[1] Faculty of Pedagogy and Educational Sciences, University of Bremen, Germany
[2] Research Centre Media and Journalism Studies, University of Groningen, The Netherlands
[3] Institute of Communication Studies and Journalism, Charles University, Czechia
[4] Department of Media and Culture Studies, Utrecht University, The Netherlands

* Corresponding author (c.bozdag@rug.nl)

Abstract
This editorial introduces the thematic issue titled *Inclusive Media Literacy Education for Diverse Societies*. We start by introducing our aims for developing a more open and inviting approach to media education. We argue for a media education that acknowledges a variety of voices, and that provides skills and recognition for everyone, irrespective of their social class, status, gender identification, sexuality, race, ability, and other variables. The articles in this issue address the role of media literacy education in relation to questions of in- and exclusion, social justice, voice, and listening. The issue covers a variety of critical, non-Western perspectives needed to challenge dominant regimes of representation. The editorial is enriched by the artist Neetje's illustrations of the workshop that preceded the publication of this thematic issue.

Issue
This editorial is part of the issue "Inclusive Media Literacy Education for Diverse Societies" edited by Çiğdem Bozdağ (University of Groningen / University of Bremen), Annamária Neag (Charles University), and Koen Leurs (Utrecht University).

1. Introduction

The seeds of this thematic issue were sown at the Inclusive Media Education for Diverse Societies workshop (University of Groningen on 11 and 12 November 2022) organized by the editors and Alex P. Smit (University of Groningen) with the aim of bringing together critical and alternative approaches to media education addressing the issue of cultural diversity. The workshop was opened by a keynote by Maria José Brites who articulated important conceptual groundwork to set the stage for dialogue on media literacy, diversity, and inclusion. The artist Renée van den Kerkhof (https://www.neetje.nl) visually harvested the keynote and subsequent panel sessions.

Figure 1 captures some of the main scholarly discussions in the field of media literacy education, which we seek to contribute to this thematic issue. Inspired by the keynote, key points of departure include: (a) An aware-ness of a plurality of voices, perspectives, and understandings of media literacy proliferate, which demand us researchers to be explicit in positioning ourselves as we produce knowledge on media literacy; (b) media literacy is not an instrumental, neutral domain, rather (critical) media literacy offers means to promote civic engagement and political activism; (c) a commitment to understanding media literacy education as providing the fundament to fulfil potentialities and promote critical thinking, needed for digital citizenship, participation, and a profound engagement with otherness, social injustices and inequalities; (d) media literacy should equip people with the necessary skills to consume, scrutinize and produce a variety of (digital) media content, alongside stimulating ethics of engagement and listening, needed to foster intercultural dialogue and understanding (see also Boyington et al., 2022; Buckingham, 2019; Higdon & Huff, 2022; Hoechsmann et al., 2021; Kellner & Share, 2019).

Figure 1. The need for a diversity of voices in media literacy studies. Image by Neetje (2022).

Of particular urgency during the Covid-19 health pandemic, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and the impending global warming-induced climate catastrophe, media literacy has often been considered the antidote to the problem of misinformation, giving people the skills for fact-checking and fighting fake news (Stoddard et al., 2021). Conceptualizing media literacy through a set of skills and overemphasizing the role of accuracy of media content, runs the risk of ignoring the ideological role of media practices in establishing and maintaining the socio-political mechanisms of marginalization and exclusion. Thus, for media literacy education to be able to address media injustices and contribute to inclusion, equity, and social justice, it needs to address how a specific racialized, heteronormative, able-body-oriented order is maintained through the media. Moreover, we need to re-design educational programs to support the inclusion of marginalized and vulnerable people in society (Neag et al., 2022).

In order to design a more inclusive approach to media literacy education, we can benefit from existing strands of critical research including critical pedagogy, postcolonial and decolonial theory, indigenous thinking, Afrofuturism, and pedagogy of Black livingness (Griffin & Turner, 2021) among others. We believe that media education can address media injustices and contribute to a more just society by challenging existing regimes of representation. This requires a continuous critical self-reflection process on the side of scholars, educators, practitioners, policy-makers, media-makers, and participants of education programs (Keifer-Boyd et al., 2022). Furthermore, injustices that the media creates or challenges can only be understood through an intersectional approach looking at the mutual constitution of social class, gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, migration status, generation, age, and ability (Hill-Collins & Bilge, 2020). We also believe in the potential of media for amplifying voices of those who are vulnerable and marginalized by existing social structures (Butler, 2021). Several programs exist that offer media production education for marginalized communities. However, these often address minorities and other marginalized groups in undifferentiated categories of for example "sexual minorities," "migrants," or "refugees," there is also a need for approaches that recognize the distinct histories and experiences of exclusion in society and the media environments. Researchers addressing the ideas, practices, and materials of critical media literacy education draw from quantitative

and qualitative approaches, ranging from discourse analysis, participatory action research, focus groups, and interviews to case studies or surveys. This thematic issue brings together articles from scholars with a variety of disciplinary orientations, individual contributions address one or more of the above-mentioned points with the aim of developing a more inclusive approach to media education.

2. Overview of the Articles

With the aim of contributing to the rethinking of questions of inclusion, equality, and difference in relation to media literacy, this thematic issue presents 15 articles that develop critical and alternative perspectives, studies, and interventions in the field of media education. Figures 3, 4, 5, and 6 offer visualizations of a selection of the articles presented.

The first article in this thematic issue, titled "Children's News Media as a Space for Learning About Difference" is authored by communication scholar Camilla Haavisto, education scholar Avanti Chajed, and journalism researcher Rasmus Kyllönen (Haavisto et al., 2022). Haavisto et al. (2022) consider how ideas about difference and sameness underpin the lived curriculum of media professionals. They do so by addressing how

media products in the Finnish context targeting children discursively construct possible means of co-habiting with difference. The authors put conviviality on the agenda of critical media literacy studies, a critical concept developed by postcolonial theorist Paul Gilroy to address "multiculture [as] an ordinary feature of social life" (Gilroy, 2005, p. xv). Foregrounding the relevance of studying ordinary, everyday lived experiences of difference, and its (digital) mediation, new connections are established between media education and dialogues on mediated cosmopolitanism (Ponzanesi, 2020). Media education scholars Julian McDougall and Isabella Rega (2022), with their article titled "Beyond Solutionism: Differently Motivating Media Literacy," take us on a journey through several countries (Bangladesh, Tunisia, Turkey, and the UK) where they carried out media literacy projects as they argue for a theory of change. They show how this theory of change rather than a neutral, universal set of competences can situate media literacy as a form of context-bound capability development that takes into account the complexities of diverse societies.

Communication scholars Ana Filipa Oliveira, Maria José Brites, and Carla Cerqueira (2022), in the third article titled "Intergenerational Perspectives on Media and Fake News During Covid-19: Results From Online Intergenerational Focus Groups" demonstrate the

Figure 2. Visual harvest of the arguments made in the articles by Haavisto et al. (2022), Oliveira et al. (2022), and Tsene (2022). Image by Neetje (2022).

urgency of considering the axis of generation in studying media literacies. The authors use online intergenerational focus groups to attend to unequal access, use, and understanding of information. Verifying information has been of particular urgency during the Covid-19 pandemic, because in the words of World Health Organization director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, "We're not just fighting a pandemic; we're fighting an infodemic" (Ghebreyesus, 2020). The article also offers methodological insight into the participatory and creative elicitation technique of using hand drawings during focus groups. The fourth article "Using Comics as a Media Literacy Tool for Marginalised Groups: The Case of Athens Comics Library" by Lida Tsene (2022) takes comics as a multimodal tool to foster media literacy. Media scholar Tsene, who is also the founder of the Athens Comics Library, in this commentary piece draws from experiences with refugee populations. Tsene directs attention to the distinctive medium-specificity of media genres media educators work with. Each media has specific affordances, enabling particular practices and processes, and discarding others. The process of drawing comics reveals particular potentialities for creative expression and engagement with the politics of difference.

In the fifth article, "Storytelling as Media Literacy and Intercultural Dialogue in Post-Colonial Societies,"

Maria Teresa Cruz's and Madalena Miranda's (2022) thought-provoking article, they reflect upon the possibilities of digital storytelling to re-open and re-discuss issues connected to African-European heritage, histories, and shared identities. The authors provide an in-depth discussion on how digital technologies and media literacy education can provide meaningful tools for intercultural dialogue. Çiğdem Bozdağ (2022), in the sixth article, "Inclusive Media Education in the Diverse Classroom: A Participatory Action Research in Germany," presents the findings of a project that aimed to analyze the everyday media use of young people with diverse cultural backgrounds in a socio-economically disadvantaged neighborhood and co-develop teaching modules on media literacy education from an intercultural perspective. In the seventh article, "Aspiring to Dutchness: Media Literacy, Integration, and Communication with Eritrean Status Holders," cultural studies scholars Rosanne van Kommer and Joke Hermes (2022) discuss the role of media literacy in communication processes between professionals and Eritrean status holders in the mandatory Dutch integration process. Based on qualitative interviews, they demonstrate the need to decolonize and rethink media literacy and citizenship beyond neoliberal and Western-centric frameworks. Gilda Seddighi (2022), in the eighth article titled "Taking a Dialogical

Figure 3. Visual harvest of the arguments made in the articles by Cruz and Miranda (2022), Bozdağ (2022), and Seddighi (2022). Image by Neetje (2022).

Approach to Guiding Gaming Practices in a Non-Family Context," analyzes the perception of gaming practices among unaccompanied refugee youth and social workers in different organizations in Norway. She discusses the importance of a dialogue between the youth and the social workers about gaming and media literacy among youth as gaming has the potential to help in fostering social connections and coping with trauma among the unaccompanied refugee youth.

Education scholars Sílvia Melo-Pfeifer and Helena Dedecek Gertz (2022) discuss the potentials of using disinformation about migration as a pedagogical source for intercultural learning and diversity awareness in the ninth article titled "Transforming Disinformation on Minorities Into a Pedagogical Resource: Towards a Critical Intercultural News Literacy." They propose the concept of "critical intercultural news literacy" for critically analyzing the representation patterns of refugees and migrants in the news. In the tenth article, titled "Joining and Gaining Knowledge From Digital Literacy Courses: How Perceptions of Internet and Technology Outweigh Socio-Demographic Factors," new media scholars Azi Lev-On, Hama Abu-Kishk, and Nili Steinfeld (2022) present the findings of a research project carried out in Israel assessing the short-term effects of participation in

computer and internet literacy programs. Interestingly, the authors found that both motivations and knowledge gains were predicted almost exclusively by participants' perceptions of technology and the Internet, and not by socio-demographic or other variables. In the eleventh article "When Everyone Wins: Dialogue, Play, and Black History for Critical Games Education," game and education studies scholars Rebecca Rouse and Amy Corron Youmans (2022) discuss the potential of using dialogue for adopting critical and anti-racist pedagogy in game design education. More specifically, they discuss the potential of transformation through dialogue among students in game design practice focusing on the legacy of Harriet Tubman, who was a black anti-slavery activist.

In the twelfth article, "Digital Rights, Institutionalized Youths, and Contexts of Inequalities," communication scholars Maria José Brites and Teresa Sofia Castro (2022) focus on institutionalized youth. They address how their digital environments are regulated by the institutions and their engagement with the media. Building on the data collected in the DiCi-Educa project in Portugal, the authors point out different levels of constraints on the digital rights of the institutionalized youth, who only have limited access to digital technologies and only under close supervision. In the thirteenth

Figure 4. Visual harvest of the arguments made in the articles by Melo-Pfeifer and Gertz (2022) and Rouse and Youmans (2022). Image by Neetje (2022).

Figure 5. Visual harvest of the arguments made in the articles by Supa et al. (2022) and Sousa and Costa (2022). Image by Neetje (2022).

article titled "Beyond Digital Literacy in Australian Prisons: Theorizing 'Network Literacy,' Intersectionality, and Female Incarcerated Students," the sociologist Susan Hopkins (2022) calls for greater attention to the role of media literacy in the context of incarceration. She addresses from an intersectional perspective the multi-faceted needs of indigenous Australians and women in custody to become active agents prepared to return to the network society outside of prison. Media scholars Markéta Supa, Lucie Römer, and Vojtěch Hodboď (2022) present three case studies focusing on media literacy education and social inclusion in vocational schools in the fourteenth article, "Including the Experiences of Children and Youth in Media Education." They discuss how an experience-based and reflective approach to media literacy education can nurture social inclusion among different groups of disadvantaged youth. Finally, "Mapping the Inclusion of Children and Youth With Disabilities in Media Literacy Research" is the title of the fifteenth article authored by communication scholars Carla Sousa and Conceição Costa (2022) and it showcases the results of a systematic literature review focusing on the inclusion of children with disabilities in media literacy research. As it was expected, there are far and few between such stud-

ies, as authors only found 12 articles within a sample of 1,175 articles.

We agree with Douglas Kellner and Share that media literacy is "an unfulfilled challenge" (2019, p. 3). However, we hope that with the conceptual and methodological tools and empirical insights presented in this thematic issue, we have put on the agenda the need for greater attention for inclusion, diversity, and social justice in media literacy education.

Acknowledgments

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About the Authors

Çiğdem Bozdağ (PhD) is an assistant professor at the Research Centre for Media and Journalism Studies at the University of Groningen. Bozdağ is also a Marie Sklodowska Curie fellow in the Faculty of Education at the University of Bremen, with her project INCLUDED (2019–2023). Her research interests include digital media use, media and migration, inter- and transcultural communication, digital media literacy, and media education.

Annamária Neag (PhD) is a civic-minded scholar who focuses on topics related to media literacy education, activism, and migration. She has taught at universities in several countries in Europe and Asia. Neag was awarded the prestigious Marie Curie Fellowship, funded by the European Commission. Neag is currently leading an international research group at Charles University in Prague (Czech Republic).

Koen Leurs is an associate professor in gender, media, and migration studies at the Graduate Gender Program of the Department of Media and Culture, Utrecht University, the Netherlands. Leurs is the principal investigator in the project Co-Designing a Fair Digital Asylum System (2022–2023). Recently he co-edited the *SAGE Handbook of Media and Migration* (2020), together with Kevin Smets, Saskia Witteborn, Myria Georgiou, and Radhika Gajjala. His second monograph is titled *Digital Migration Studies* (Sage, 2023). Leurs is a member of the editorial board of the journal *Media and Communication*.