Communicative Competence in Children with Early Exposure to Digital Screens and social media

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Abstract

This project is based on the research on the effects of children's early exposure to digital screens, in general, and social networks, in particular, and the relationship with their communicative competence. First, a qualitative study is carried out in order to a paramount understanding of the state of the art. On a second place, and thanks to the previous study, a qualitative and quantitative survey is made to teachers and parents. In the first case, the survey aims at checking students' communication skills; and, in the second one, parents are asked about children's addiction to technology and its consequences in social interactions. These questionnaires give us data from different perspectives and help us to assess children´s technological environment as well as their relationship with cross-cutting issues such as cognitive, physical, emotional and social development. Results show that early exposure to digital screens and social networks are more harmful than beneficial for children's communication skills. As technology is a tool that tends to be misused and unsupervised, children are exposed children to inappropriate and unmanageable content that undermines communicative experiences. These elements can be instrumental in changing the current mindset about parenting and education conditioned by digital screens and social media. This situation tends to be more individualistic and far from face-to-face interactions. These interactions are highly important for the academic and personal formation of those who are currently growing and developing alienated from them. In this sense, this research contributes to fulfill two fundamental principles stated in the new Spanish Education regulations (LOMLOE): the inclusion of civic and ethic education and the prevention of learning difficulties to improve academic results in basic areas as communication.

Keywords: cognitive development; communication; emotional management; integration; social media.