# THE NEW SUBJECTIVITIES: THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL IN DIGITALIZED ENVIRONMENTS

[1]ANDRÉS FELIPE LÓPEZ BARRIOS, [2]ANA PAOLA FUENTES RODRÍGUEZ, [3]ALEXANDER ARDILA NAVARRO, [4]JHONNY JAVIER ARROYO MARTINEZ,
[1,2,3,4]Universidad Popular Del Cesar

*Summary*
*Easy access to media has led to the constant consumption of information through electronic devices, raising questions about the awareness and purpose behind this consumption, especially in children. The pandemic changed educational and social dynamics, giving rise to a hybridization between face-to-face and virtual. Participation in digital media has transformed the way children relate, learn, and construct subjectivities. Schools and teachers must adapt to these new realities and foster critical thinking and transmedia skills in students.*
***Keywords:****Information consumption, Media, Pandemic, Education.*

## INTRODUCTION:

In the digital age, constant access to media has redefined the way we consume information, creating a society immersed in an interconnected world through electronic devices. This phenomenon, which has affected people of all ages, raises crucial questions about the consciousness and purpose behind information consumption, especially when it comes to children, who are being exposed to a constant bombardment of data and influence. In addition, the global pandemic that destabilized our lives from various angles, particularly in the educational and social fields, has accelerated the transformation of the relationship between individuals and digital media. Education and socialization are no longer limited to the physical space of the school, as technological mediations have become fundamental allies to fulfill educational purposes.

This paper explores how participation in digital media has shaped the way children relate, learn, and construct their own subjectivities in a world increasingly mediated by technology. As digital media becomes an integral component of everyday life, schools and teachers are challenged to adapt to these new realities. In addition, there is a need to foster critical thinking and transmedia skills in students, allowing them to actively participate in various contexts and providing them with the ability to understand and transform their own realities. In this context, it is essential to rethink the role of the school and its contribution to the formation of individuals capable of facing the challenges of a mediatized society.

**Development:**

Today, easy access to the media leads to the deliberate and constant consumption of information; Different activities mediated by electronic devices are invaded by diverse content, when opening a video, listening to music, turning on the television or belonging to a social network, as if by magic all kinds of information appears, and this does not displease us at all, on the contrary, we are clamoring for more. Of course, this does not happen spontaneously, the way in which the information we consume is exposed is so tempting, ingenious and eye-catching that it seems harmless, in addition, accompanied by audiovisual elements, it manages to capture the attention of adults and children, but are we aware of what information we are consuming? Why or why do we consume it? Do we question ourselves about the real message of the information we consume? So what about children, who are also exposed to this bombardment of information?

The pandemic was an event that came to destabilize societies from different points of view, but for the purposes of this document the focus will be on the educational and social field. This situation of global repercussions came to question many aspects of daily life that were taken for granted, the school as an exclusive space for education and as an important space for socialization, the place of

the teacher as a symbol of knowledge and, inevitably, technological mediations, no longer as enemies of the school, but as the best allies to fulfill educational purposes.

To understand, social dynamics such as work and study were mimicked with family dynamics, the times dedicated to different activities were made more flexible in such a way that their limits were diluted, it was no longer so clear where work or study time ended and where family time began, routines changed,  The need to communicate with others outside the home meant that the ways of relating to others were never the same, the different digital platforms that allowed video calls, calls and chats generated the emergence of new forms of socialization and participation in digital media, and these forms of communication still occupy an important place in society.

Now, teachers, parents, boys and girls longed for the return to face-to-face learning, perhaps with the illusion that everything would return to being as before, but like any crisis, the pandemic generated new uncertainties, new learning and many changes, as dynamics were generated that in principle took the name of hybridizations (between face-to-face and virtuality) but that with the passing of the days have stopped mixing two realities to begin with to position itself as a reality in itself, in which virtual and face-to-face dynamics coexist and complement each other.

To illustrate the above postulate, it can be seen that some forms of mediatized socialization were accentuated that, although they already existed before, after the pandemic their presence has become stronger. This can also be seen in school dynamics, children have changed their ways of relating, their ways of learning, their interests and their skills, mediations and technological devices have been incorporated into the daily lives of children and they are even pushing harder and harder to be part of the daily life of the school.  Not only as an educational tool, but also as an essential element in the processes of socialization, participation in society and as a means of relating to the world.

Undoubtedly, technologically mediated experiences have led to the construction of new subjects, of new subjectivities, and this is what this document aims to analyze in relation to the new demands of the context and the role of the school and the teacher as participating actors in the process of formation of the subjects.

To begin with, it is worth noting that technological devices such as cell phones and computers ceased to be for the exclusive use of adults to become for the use of everyone, first due to the need to replace academic activities that at first were supervised or restricted by adults, but later, they began to occupy an important place in all daily activities so that the rules were relaxed.  The times, spaces and reasons for use, activities such as sharing (virtually) with family and friends, seeking entertainment and academic activities, normalized the "free" use of technological devices in children.

The foregoing leads to the question about the uses that children make of technological media, what criteria do the subjects in training have to make use of these technological media?, and this question implies a question about the subject that is intended to be trained, why and for what purpose is what is taught what is taught?,  What skills, competencies, attitudes, and values should students develop to perform in today's scenarios and environments?

Faced with these questions, the role of the teacher and his or her practices is a fundamental element to be taken into account, since these questions implicitly carry the latent concern for education, since technology goes beyond the place of a tool and begins to be considered as an object of teaching and learning, in order to respond critically to the needs of subjects to actively participate in a mediatized society.  understanding mediatization as

"a series of processes that not only leads to a greater presence of the media in culture and society, but also motivates other institutions and spheres to depend on them and their logics" (Hjarvard, 2016, p.240)

In accordance with the above, technological mediations are present in different aspects of life, they are no longer considered as a simple tool and begin to bring with them certain implications such as forms of socialization, the processes of knowing and inhabiting the world, forms of participation in society and, therefore, the construction of subjectivities. These implications should not be left to chance, so from the role of the teacher there is the possibility of thinking and proposing teaching and learning purposes with respect to technological mediations in such a way that subjects can

assume an active participation in situations mediated by technology, and that role can be active and successful as long as it has a training process that allows it.

In order to analyze the questions indicated, it is worth highlighting the interest in the construction of subjectivities, as the subject becomes the center in the relationships that are woven between school dynamics and participation in digital environments. Thus, it is necessary to clarify that subjectivity is understood as "a peculiar and singular link that each subject establishes with his or her world" (Souto, 2009, p.20), finding that in the relationship that subjects establish with their world, technological mediations occupy a very important place and therefore, the school could take it into account as a factor that mediates the construction of subjectivity.  that constructs, deconstructs and reconstructs subjects.

Thus, the way in which subjects experience and know their reality, the experiences they have, are fundamental in the process of constructing their subjectivity, therefore, the communication processes under which the world is related and known are fundamental in the process of constructing subjectivities and it is here where certain particularities that appear in the processes mediated by technology begin to be noticed. The formats and means of communication and even the languages used have been transformed in such a way that there are new tacit norms for technologically mediated communication that differ from the culturally constructed norms for communication in times and spaces of a face-to-face nature, such as the use of emoticons or the replacement of images with messages of complete meaning.  such as stickers or memes.

In terms of access to and training of knowledge, before the pandemic, school was the place par excellence where formal knowledge was accessed, the place where the first friends were made and people learned to live in community, but in times of pandemic, digital media were changing these dynamics; The different technological media took a preponderant place, the construction of knowledge revolved around the information found in digital media, technological devices mediated the teaching and learning processes and the great variety of educational platforms simulated school spaces that, although they allowed an exchange of information, on many occasions other processes that were carried out in the (physical) space of the school were unknown.  Thus, curricular learning could be replaced by digital mediations, but other learning more of the social order was relegated.

The above invites us to sharpen our gaze on the socialization processes of children that, before the pandemic, generally took place in person, in situations of immediate communication, in simultaneous spaces and times, but that due to circumstances of the pandemic these mediatized processes had a profound transformation of languages, in such a way that it affected the modes of expression and communication in all areas.  even in fields as vital as the construction of oneself, relationships with others and the formulation of the world (Sibilia, 2016) and although  the use of social networks existed even long before the pandemic, its use increased.

In the past, children generally participated in a controlled and/or supervised manner by a responsible adult, social relationships took place mainly at school and in their environment in person, but changes in school dynamics implied new socialization processes, the use of technological means was essential to establish communication with others, and the permanent need for technological devices normalized their use.  this contributed to redefining social interaction in a given area and consequently, new conditions and dynamics of social interaction emerged (Hjarvard, 2016. p. 235) which led to the relaxation of rules at home regarding devices and what children consumed in them. This leads to new realities that change the interaction of boys and girls with their environment and therefore gives rise to the formation of subjectivities that lead the student to relate differently, changing paradigms of behavior established by hierarchical orders that do not dialogue with the new reality, as new ways of being and being with others emerge.  as Van  Dijk puts it, "The behavioural patterns existing in offline (physical) sociality are increasingly mixed with the social and socio-technical norms generated in the online environment" (2019, p.23).

Thus, after experiencing other processes of socialization and knowledge of the world, behaviors, norms and ways of communicating with others were transformed and this situation cannot go unnoticed in the educational community, in view of which the need to reflect on what is taught in school is reiterated.  Starting from the recognition of the new subjectivities that coexist in it, boys

and girls who demonstrate interests and aptitudes in line with the use and participation in digital media and this implies thinking about what is taught and why it is taught.

From this point of view, in order to think about what to teach and why to teach, it is necessary to recognize the participation of children in digital media and understand that, as Van Dijk (2019) states, the network becomes a "connected sociality" that implicitly carries new forms and unfinished norms of communication, constantly changing according to the demands of those who participate in the networks and therefore imply new skills and abilities. skills that allow them to participate actively, not only as consumers of information or certain content, but also as "prosumers", that is, as consumers and producers of information (Fainholc, 2004).

Questions then arise about what should be done from the school to adapt to the dizzying changes, being clear that it must be taught in the digital age, recognizing the role it plays in appropriating the new culture, this opens up a world of possibilities, understanding it as the opportunity for subjects to reflect on their reality and manage to transform it; The importance of skills development is also found as a strong theme in relation to the consumption and participation in digital media, taking into account that the capacities and skills that the school intends to develop must respond to these requirements.

Thus, Jenkins' (2006) contributions to transmedia competencies, understood as skills related to the production, distribution and consumption of content in digital media, taking into account the requirements of mediatized societies, are taken up. Among the skills proposed by the author, it is pertinent to emphasize some of them, in order to promote a critical participatory role on the part of children in digital media. One of them  is *The Construction of Meaning*, a skill that would allow subjects to reflect on the meaning of what is expressed in digital media, trying to go beyond the immediacy of the content that circulates on the network and delving into the staging of subjectivities. Another skill to highlight is  *the new media literacy*, as this implies the ability to "critically evaluate and develop content that uses new forms of communication" (Jenkins, 2006), a skill that goes hand in hand with the purpose of promoting students' critical thinking, so that they have the ability to decide on content.  both that they are consumed and that they are produced.

Finally, the construction of subjectivities is an issue that underlies participation in digital media and the configuration of critical subjects, capable of objectifying and therefore constructing their reality (Najmanovich, 2001) since the dynamics of these contexts entail different ways of inhabiting, being and seeing the world, of relating to others and to the environment itself.  But taking into account the influence of various actors and factors in the construction of new subjectivities, it is important to ask about the critical thinking that subjects can form in this process of interaction in digital contexts.

Up to this point, the approaches to the subjectivities that are constructed from various situations mediated by technology have been exposed, taking into account the growing participation in digital media, not only by young people and adults, but also by the immersion in these media from an early age. In this way, it can be understood that subjectivities, as constructs that take place in the processes of socialization, in the relationships that are established with others and with the world, have been transformed, since they are now highly mediatized.

These transformations in the construction of subjectivities invite us to think about the work of the school or the role of the teacher in terms of the participation they have in the construction of the subjects themselves, since it is evident that technological media cross different spheres of people's lives and this implies certain demands of the context in relation to the appropriate use and participation in technological media.  This situation is related to the research interest that has been developed in the thesis, which aims to give a stronger focus to the study of the process of construction of subjectivities based on the use of technologies by children between 8 and 10 years old, since it is a population group that has been little studied in relation to this topic.  To this end, it is necessary to develop critical thinking in children, so that this allows them to make conscious decisions regarding what is consumed in digital media and the ways in which they can participate in them, encouraging participation that goes beyond the consumption of information and that results in the production of content in the digital media most frequented by them.

With respect to the above, it is necessary to rethink the place of the school, since it can no longer be limited to the physical space in which people go with the intention of learning content or acquiring information, since technological tools, media and digital spaces can easily replace this function, instead, the school must attend to the new demands. and to understand what is currently expected of subjects, what subjects expect from school, and how technological tools and mediations become allies in educational processes. Thus, the development of critical thinking, skills and competencies is much more useful for the subjects in training, as it will allow them to actively participate in different contexts and will give them the opportunity to understand and transform their realities.

## CONCLUSION:

In a world where constant access to media and participation in digital media are ubiquitous, a number of significant challenges arise for the education and training of individuals, especially for children. The pandemic accelerated the transformation of education and socialization, leading to a hybridization between face-to-face and virtual, and participation in digital media has become fundamental in the daily lives of young people.

This transformation raises the need for schools and teachers to adapt to new realities, fostering critical thinking and transmedia skills in students. Children must learn to be critical consumers of information, but also to be producers of content in digital media. The new subjectivities that are built in this digital environment require special attention and a deep understanding of how technological means influence the way individuals relate, learn, and relate to the world.

Ultimately, the education of the future must go beyond the mere transmission of information and adapt to the needs of a mediatized society. Students should be empowered to actively participate in the creation and understanding of content in digital media, enabling them to make informed decisions and transform their realities. The school plays a crucial role in this task, by recognising and embracing the importance of participation in digital media and the construction of subjectivities in the digital age.

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