Competencies About the News for Elementary School Children

# Details

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Book chapter

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The Handbook of Media Education Research

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## Topics

## Sample

A total of 15 cases were selected based on target age (7–10 years old) and goal (empirical approaches to educate children about the news): news literacy lessons that educators are teaching at schools (six cases); news literacy lessons passed along to children in informal settings (three nonfiction picture books and six digital games aimed at educating children about the news)

## Implications For Educators About

## Implications For Policy Makers About

Other

## Other PolicyMaker Implication

Updating the educational training to include media education

## Implications For Stakeholders About

Researchers

# Abstract

This chapter summarizes a descriptive analysis of competencies about news appreciation and construction that can be passed along to children from ages 7–10 in formal and informal educative settings. It fills a gap that exists in the academic literature with reference to comprehensive documentation of the competencies, which are often passed over in initiatives geared toward improving news literacy. Most news exposure happens in an informal context, which means it is only natural that news media education also occurs most often in informal settings. The chapter examines the news literacy lessons that educators are teaching at schools by reviewing the literature that specifically describes interventions in the classroom. It discusses news literacy key concepts: introduction to journalism, theory and ethics, history, and news construction analysis. The chapter provides information on news literacy skills for 7–10-year-old children. The skills include production skills, technical skills, and research skills.

# Outcome

"The aim of this study was to examine what competencies about the news can be taught to children from 7 to 10 years in formal and informal settings. Analyzed data show that news media education for children typically covers seven key categories: knowledge about introduction to journalism; ethics; history of journalism and news construction; and production, technical, and research skills.
While the analyzed cases prioritize building skills, some space still exists to develop abstract knowledge in key concepts. In this data set, skills had slightly more weight than knowledge, suggesting that these educative initiatives followed the motto 'children learn by doing'. That result is not surprising, as these children are usually in the concrete operational stage. However, it is worth highlighting that more abstract concepts, like the ones related to ethics, were also present in several of the analyzed cases.
The set of competencies for elementary school children may seem similar to what is taught to older participants; however, specific themes were tailored for younger learners [there is a need to avoid sensitive topics such as terrorism or war]" (Campos, I., 2020: 177).
"Also, in some of the analyzed cases, educational approaches switch between fantasy and reality in their methodology. (...) Informal resources complement formal interventions in terms of lessons passed along to children. Analyzed data show that the competencies being taught at schools
are similar to the lessons that informal resources contain. Resources available for formal
and informal settings may be used complementarily. (...) School interventions follow a similar structure, even when approaching different topics, and the educator is usually the main definer of that structure. (...)
Further directions of study into this view may include other topics and competencies not found in the analyzed cases, such as media effects and media systems. None of the analyzed cases included lessons about the effects of the media. However, scholars maintain that understanding how the brain assimilates media messages forms an important component of media literacy (Potter 2011). The analyzed cases also rarely approached issues about media systems or funding models, with some authors stressing the importance of these topics to news literacy (Hobbs 2010b). Perhaps the educators considered these topics too complex for 7–10‐year‐old children. Or, it is possible they considered these topics not related to the specific purpose of their own intervention. Future research could study why these topics are left out of educative initiatives and the potential benefit if they were to be included in the set of topics and competencies taught to this group of children" (Campos, I., 2020: 179).