Media(ting) Between Generations: Common Sense and Perceptions of New Media by Young People and Teachers

# Details

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## Authors

Riva C.;Tosolini C.;Pattaro C.

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## Sample

30 third grade students and teachers

# Abstract

The widespread of mobile communication devices, the expansion of social media and participatory media platforms, the ease to edit, share and produce media content, indicate a trend of change in the media system that influences the production and consumption of knowledge and generates new paths for the young’s identity construction. This raises necessary questions about the ways not only young, but also the education agencies – school in particular – relate to these transformations, starting from taking into account the production of common sense on the use, risks and opportunities of the media. Based on these considerations, in this paper, we will discuss the results of a qualitative case study carried out in the Veneto Region (Italy) on upper secondary school students and teachers in order to detect and compare the perception that young and educators have of the media, trying to identify boundaries or land on which to build exchange opportunities for dialogue between the generations.

# Outcome

"the basic problem of common sense concerning the
relationship between the internet and minors emerges in both adults and
teenagers. In adults, it emerges from the separation between imagined,
feared risks and real ones – as well as the distance between different
cultural worlds – that prevent them from knowing what young actually do
online and that propel them to attribute partial, ambivalent or even distorted
meanings to such activities.
Importantly, what emerges from the adults/teachers’ accounts is their
tendency to remain stuck on a representation of media that seems not to
take into account what they mean to teenagers, even when it considers their
positive aspects: media are not ends in themselves – they do help teenagers
build a relational universe that is embedded in everyday life. Only a few
teachers mention the fact that media are also the means through which
teenagers express forms of creative adaptation to an environment by shaping their own digital space (Giaccardi, 2010) and by experiencing the
web as a way of expanding their own relational possibilities (Vittadini,
2010) and experimenting with their identity (Pattaro, 2015). [...]
some interviewees hint at the possibility of investing in a
form of mutual socialisation (Tosolini, Pattaro Riva, 2016) in which
everyone – teenager or adult, barbarian or civilised – can learn from one
another and offer their skills in exchange. Through this exchange, different
skills and abilities can communicate to reach a meeting ground. On one
hand, teenagers are more familiar with online activities – they can use
media and develop new modalities and styles of socialising and
communicating. On the other hand, adults are sources of broader
experiences in how to manage relationships as well as of knowledge that
can help teenagers use medial languages more consciously, critically and
independently (Colombo, 2015)." (Riva et al., 2016, pp. 241-243).