# Education, Pedagogy and Literacies: Challenges and Horizons of Film Literacy

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**Abstract**

The contemporary society has given rise to the profound need to introduce in the fields of pedagogy and didactics the work with literacies and the transmutation capacity of the teacher as a new actor in these themes, facing them as challenges that allow a more adequate formation in contemporaneity. Our aim is to reflect on the potential of teaching emerging literacies, based on studies on education and literacy, in order to update teachers for the 21st century, that is, with new skills that are now needed to deal with a new public, an information society increasingly full of data, platforms and languages. Between the most relevant literacies we find the film literacy that has a transversal, interdisciplinary and multicultural nature, as well as a double requirement: the knowledge of its identity as an autonomous matter of study and its teaching, allowing the transmission of semiotic instruments and tools, adaptable to different audiences and characteristics. Film literacy requires an axial place in Higher Education, along with other Literacies, in order to allow the acquisition of an adequate semiotic response to the ever more complex and omnipresent universe of information.

**Keywords**: education, pedagogy and literacies, challenges, horizons, film, literacy

## Introduction

### Literacies, Higher Education Innovation, Pedagogy

Contemporary society has given rise to a profound and inescapable need to (re) think the universes of Education and Pedagogy, namely the incorporation of Literacies in the teaching-learning process, increasingly marked by the generation of digital natives and the web 4.0. In fact, the stages of web 1.0, with the 1990s as background and the creation of corporate websites, static pages, access to information, but without user interaction or creation of contents as distinctive facets, web 2.0, with the organization of communities and the beginning of the content creation process, web 3.0, the semantic web, with the deepening of the processes of the previous stage are gone, we are now at the forefront of the web 4.0 stage, characterized by its organization, complexity, mobility, ubiquity and with young people in symbiotic relationship with progress and technologies. The great challenges of Education on the horizon for 2030 are clearly focused on acquiring the skills to understand and interpret the world, launching a prepared look and activating critical thinking for a more fruitful exercise in reading the times and the complex spaces of contemporary and citizenship, as referred to in the OECD report The Future of Education and Skills:

Education has a vital role to play in developing the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that enable people to contribute to and benefit from an inclusive and sustainable future. Learning to form clear and purposeful goals, work with others with different perspectives, find untapped opportunities and identify multiple solutions to big problems will be essential in the coming years. Education needs to aim to do more than prepare young people for the world of work; it needs to equip students with the skills they need to become active, responsible and engaged citizens (2018, p. 5)

As a result of the technological progress and the emergence of children and youngsters, Prensky (2001) calls them Digital Natives, reflecting on these changes, and even classifies the 21st Century as the century of the Digital Society. These young people reveal new skills such as multi-tasking at the same time, a permanent exposure to ICT, and an ability to coexist with a variety of digital platforms and gadgets. These students, also known as Generation Y (1980-2000),

Generation Z (2000 - 2010) and the current Alpha Generation (born after 2010) naturally lead (re) thinking to educational institutions, motivating a wave of pedagogical innovation that covers the teacher, the teaching-learning space-time and the profile of these new students, in clear combination with technological innovation.

This new student profile implies a new teacher profile, both being framed in a new educational paradigm, with technological challenges increasingly advanced and multiform. Digital natives, with their natural harmonization with technologies, which function as real extensions to read and interpret the world, with an ever-greater fusion of written, verbal, sound and image are a huge challenge for the teacher. In the same way that this new student shows an appetite for these platforms and technologies, a corresponding need emerges to provide the literacies to correctly encode and decode the information he receives and creates. At the same time, the teacher must follow these challenges, seeking , in the first place, the mastery of new literacies and their subsequent teaching as a tool to understand this new world. As stated in the report of the European Commission *The Changing Pedagogical Landscape: New ways of teaching and learning and their implications for higher education policy*, this is a joint work of Higher Education Institutions and teachers, which are essential in this process of change and should be supported in this appropriation of pedagogical innovation:

One clear message has come through the discussion about innovation pedagogies and technologies: carried out requires committed and informed teachers, and a prerequisite of that is that high quality teaching is valued by universities and by funders alongside research (Boyer, 1997) must either result in, or be accompanied by, appropriate reward and recognition systems for university teachers (2015, p. 17).

We are faced with a choice, an apparent dilemma: to accept the challenges of literacy or to be quartered in educational paradigms that no longer suit current society. Prensky (2001) argues that teachers who are in educational institutions and who are more than twenty years old are immigrants in cyberspace because they were born in a different context, having learned to acquire knowledge in a way different from that used by digital natives.

UNESCO (2013) advocates the essential contribution of teachers to ensuring that all citizens are able to access, evaluate and share information, as citizens with literacy skills contribute to the goals of sustainable development, better living conditions, employment, income per capita, gross domestic product, industrialization and development of a country's infrastructure. In short, literacies increase people's ability to work because they develop their skills, as Patidar says, quoted in the report. For UNESCO, teachers are at the heart of this issue:

UNESCO recognizes that teachers in service and in training are key players in building knowledge societies. In order to teach and prepare young people for tomorrow's world, teachers themselves need to be empowered, their needs addressed and supported. As UNESCO considers MIL na essential part of 21st century competencies, the MIL Assessment Framework intends to provide not only policy makers and decision makers and relevant educational planning and teacher training institutions with accurate and reliable data on MIL, but also to supply individual teachers with tools for self-assessment and self-improvement (2013, p. 38).

Moreover, UNESCO argues that the main benefits of literacies, namely informational and media, are as follows:

• Policy and decision makers, planners and professional institutions in the fields of education, information and communication supplied with valid and reliable data on existing gaps (in terms of environment and competencies), can initiate special interventions targeting teachers in service and in training.

• After assessment, teachers in service and in training will be better informed about their own level of competencies, and will seek and participate in special training programmes on MIL, in order to improve their teaching and learning and other áreas related to their profession.

• Become more aware of the importance and usefulness of MIL for quality teaching and learning and will apply MIL in their classrooms and the training they provide (2013, p. 38).

As Santos, Scarabotto and Matos (2011, pp. 15843 - 15845) refer, the professional practice of the digital immigrant teacher is different from the way students look at knowledge and their production, which often leads to pedagogical inadequacy, such as example when criticizing their reading habits, but their communicational skills are unquestionable in social networks or multimodal platforms, where they move, read and write with perfect naturalness and competence. Thus, this society and these students take the teacher to the discovery and innovation that Guerreiro (2006) defines as the ability to see in another

way the object that has already been observed by many, generating the need to be creative and innovative, changing paradigms in the teacher training and work processes, making them compatible with the profile of digital natives.

Faced with the vertigo of technological development and the consequences in society and in the course of growth of students, there is an urgent need to harmonize Education and Training in order to train teachers at all levels of education, including Higher Education, to respond appropriately to these technological challenges and to an audience deeply immersed in this ocean of technology, information and permanent mutation. As Caeiro points out, we can point to three levels of sociocultural change:

1. Today, knowledge and intellectual production are generally not exclusive to educational systems (school / universities):

• In this way, citizens are able to access more and more easily and with greater organization;

• The information put into circulation loses the control exercised over it by academic authority;

• The education system finds an active competitor in the new networks of knowledge dissemination - communication companies and Research Laboratories based in private business systems.

2. It increases the volume of information circulating in society, as well as its complexity and pace of innovation. Thus:

• The demand for knowledge is multiplied because the stability of knowledge has a short cycle of duration;

• The singular and personal "navigations" by the world of knowledge become possible and admissible - to each person their information;

• New and varied sources of knowledge are incorporated into the production structure of knowledge.

3. The logic of the organizational structures of knowledge is altered:

• The linearity that dominated the period of hegemony of the written medium disappears before the simultaneity and "mosaicity" that the electronic and the digital impose;

• The logic of time and accumulation is transformed. Knowledge is no longer grouped according to continuous temporal patterns, qualitative changes arise continuously and do not depend on the quantitative accumulation of information (Porto and Moreira, 2017, pp. 8-9).

In fact, to look at these challenges, we need new skills to know, understand, analyze, interpret, and produce. It is not enough to incorporate the technologies of the classroom, it is now more important to train for pedagogical innovation. In this context, it is absolutely essential that Literacies are a priority in this field. So let's identify our main challenges:

1. Understand contemporary society and the torrential exposure of information;

2. Know the profile of the native digital student;

3. To enable the teacher to respond to societal, technological and teaching-learning challenges;

4. Incorporate Literacies into the classroom, from the perspective of the student, but also from the teacher.

It is important to know the Literacies as sources and strategies of appropriation of the world and to understand it, with a plural approach, to the multiliteracies, to each of the Literacies, keeping in mind the context, the level of education, and the scientific area of teaching and research. In the present case, we intend to carry out a reflexive course on multiliteracies to the specificity of Film Literacy, since it has a transverse, multidisciplinary and multicultural dimension, constituting itself as an area of knowledge with its autonomous identity in its study and in the its teaching, allowing the acquisition of interpretive, technical, narrative, aesthetic, among other skills, appropriate to various levels of education. We believe that Film Literacy deserves an axial place in Higher Education, not only in the training of future educators and teachers, but also in the training of Higher Education teachers. In fact, as noted by Moreira and Ferreira:

With the development of the mass media, especially the cinema, TV and video, the image has become a central element in the lives of men and an important vehicle for the diffusion of knowledge in the digital society. At a time when we live in a deep dependence on the image and in which it becomes increasingly necessary to develop a literacy around the reading

of what is "seen", due to the civilizational inflection that constituted the substitution of the primacy of the reading of the text by the image  it is important to understand the look, it is important to study the images and their meanings and signifiers, and above all, it is important to teach them to look and read the images (static and moving) (Moreira, J. and Ferreira, V., 2016, p. 7).

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In the context of Literacies, a first paradigm instituted the approximation between teacher and digital literacy as an initial bridge to associate them with pedagogical innovation. However, today, this paradigm proves to be insufficient to deal with the multiplicity of challenges of contemporary society, with a complex networking and an ever-increasing capacity to generate information on more varied platforms. J. António Moreira (Moreira, J. and Ferreira, V., 2016, p. 72) advocates a new paradigm that is characterized by the fusion of pedagogy and technology, promoting the development of multiliteracies, according to the multiplicity of channels of communication and respective forms of communication differentiated, citing Amasha, who advocates a pedagogical methodology through the development of multiliteracies, allowing the individual capacities of analysis in multimodal texts and even find new textual approaches.

Assuming this second paradigm as our preferred horizon, it is equally pertinent to look at the teacher in this 21st century. In this perspective, cinema will not only be considered as an ancillary tool associated with certain programmatic content, for illustration and rarely producing reflexive and critical repercussions, as it has often been in the past. In certain curricular units or disciplines, the film was used as a visual support of the literary work or of the subjects of the classes. Classic examples would be the use of *The Name of the Rose* to approach the Middle Ages, *The Maias*, *Frei Luís de Sousa* and *Amor de Perdição* to illustrate the novels in Portuguese Literature, A Brilliant Mind for the mathematical awakening, *Word and Utopia* to know life of Father António Vieira, among many others.

Cinema must be harmonized with pedagogy and didactics, being a resource, but also a scientific object of study. As such, it requires specific knowledge that only Film Literacy can provide. The teacher should thus know this literacy to transport it critically to his classes, motivating the student to the programmatic content, but also developing skills of film analysis, which would make this space-time a symbiosis of differentiated sources of information, enriching and by growing exponentially multiple potentialities of cognitive enrichment.

In view of this, we have identified the following premises: a) the teacher should seek the acquisition of Film Literacy skills, which awakens us to the training in this area of teachers of all levels of education; b) the student, in order to acquire competences in this area, at present, can only do so, by the end of secondary education, in very specific disciplines, in others in which teachers mobilize this literacy or in extra-classroom contexts; c) in Higher Education, the full conjugation between Film Literacy and pedagogical innovation, excluding courses and curricular units associated with this area (Cinema, Audiovisual, Communication Sciences...), requires, once again, teacher training and pedagogical renewal. Already in 1995, Vitor Reia-Baptista asked:

Who transforms the teacher into a person interested in cinema, a shrewd analyst of cinematographic genres, a competent contextualizer, a connoisseur of history, techniques, theories and aesthetic currents, a decoder of intercultural, political, ethnic, aesthetic and poetic messages; in short, a skilled reader of the languages of the cinema and knowledgeable of the cinematographic art in all the amplitude of its dialects? (cited by Carlos Capucho in Moreira, J. and Ferreira, V., 2016, p.88)

This question refers us to another one to which it is associated: is there adequate training in Film Literacy available to teachers at various levels of education? When we think about the levels up to the end of high school, we can find examples close to Film Literacy in continuing education, formal and non-formal courses and the recent National Film Plan, a remarkable work for the Seventh Art, the creation of audiences and training specialized.

In university and polytechnic education, the acquisition of competences in the field of literary and film literacy, in particular, can be done, more broadly, through degree courses, short courses, workshops, using E and B –Learning models, MOOCs

(Massive Open Online Courses), etc. But, in fact, we can conclude that it is urgent to invest in a thoughtful, systematic and broad way in the teaching of Film Literacy in Portugal.

The European Commission's Screening Literacy: Country Profiles report, aimed at assessing film literacy in Europe and the profile of each country, is a valuable contribution to this reflection, as it was based on the following assumption:

These country profiles are based on information provided by respondents to the European Film Literacy Survey conducted from January to June 2012. They focus on film education provision for school children and young people, and informal adult learners. Vocational and higher education provision is not, on the whole, reflected here. Unless otherwise indicated, film education is understood as developing critical and wider viewing; enjoyment; understanding of film language and of film as an art form and as a text; of popular, national and international cinema and film heritage; of different film forms or genres; and the development of filmmaking skills (2012).

In this 2012 report, Portugal presented the following facets regarding Film Literacy:

1. The absence of a national strategy for the teaching of Film Literacy;

2. The cinema is used in the various levels of teaching, as a playful instrument or associated with disciplines, as well as the production of films;

3. The contribution of the CineClubes is very relevant, mainly for the projects directed to the schools;

4. Several cultural associations actively collaborate with schools;

5.The Cinemateca has a very important mission and has developed courses and workshops for children and young people;

6. In formal terms, there are several courses on film, namely degrees, but on film literacy, in particular, only the work of the University of Algarve is known.

This diagnosis, although not very encouraging, is able to identify foci of training on Film Literacy, which came to be potentiated and that today they have gained a new élan.

In fact, in addition to the initiatives already mentioned, in particular the contribution of the CineClubes and the Cinemateca Portuguesa, the National Cinema Plan deserves particular attention, which is not yet covered by the European reports on this subject, created in collaboration by the Council Presidency of Ministers, through the Office of the Secretary of State for Culture, and the Ministry of Education and Science, by the Office of the Secretary of State for Basic and Secondary Education, in accordance with Order No. 15377/2013, published in the *Diário da República* , 2nd series, no. 229, of November 26, 2013, and operated by the Cinema and Audiovisual Institute (ICA), the Cinemateca Portuguesa - Cinema Museum and the Directorate General of Education (DGE). The National Film Plan is a program of film literacy and dissemination of Portuguese cinematography to the school public and offers instruments and contents, allowing the effective film analysis to be carried out, in conjunction with the support of various initiatives such as workshops, formations, cycles of cinema, among others, idealized by the schools that integrate the PNC.

Bearing in mind these valuable motivations, we would like to reinforce the need to think of film literacy as a factor of pedagogical innovation in Higher Education, quoting some of the key recommendations made in the European Commission's Screening Literacy: Executive Summary:

Recommendation 1:

Develop a series of **models of film education** for Europe, that include appreciation of film as an art form, critical understanding, access to national heritage, world cinema and popular film, and creative filmmaking

skills. We also recommend the adoption by EC of the revised definition of film education we use in this report:

**'The level of understanding of a film, the ability to be conscious and ncurious in the choice of films; the competence to critically watch a film and to analyse its content, cinematography and technical aspects; and the ability to manipulate its language and technical resources in creative moving image production'**

Recommendation 7:

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Member states should promote partnerships between the film industry, education agencies, and government departments. Such partnerships should seek to ensure a return in educational benefit from any investment of public money in film production. Support should include the provision of materials to enhance learning, and in particular: access to production materials (including production rushes); involvement of industry talent at events; and waiving of screening fees in a non-theatrical exhibition context.

Recommendation 11:

Member states should be encouraged to incorporate a film education component within initial teacher education programmes.

Recommendation 12:

The EC should provide online guidance on best practice in in-service training provision across the EU.

Recommendation 13:

The EC should investigate models for the collaborative provision of accredited training at M-level, for the widest range of film educators, using existing collaborative HE structures (2012).

If the European Union fully implemented these recommendations and Portugal as a member state applied them, we would have solid conditions to create a thoughtful, articulate, collaborative, innovative path with scientific and pedagogical support, technologically adequate and flexible, contributing to the consistent integration of film literacy in educational innovation environments, and in particular in Higher Education, developing critical thinking about cinema, training teachers and providing students with interpretation tools.

We consider that Portugal has already taken a very positive path in film literacy, but much more can be chalked up if we look at this opportunity with a strategic and systemic look. In view of the above, we would like to leave a set of working proposals, namely:

1. Address the challenges of contemporary society as an opportunity for pedagogical innovation in Higher Education;

2. Integrate literacy in a more incisive, systematic and profound way in Higher Education as transversal competences for teachers and students;

3. To broaden the possibilities of training and acquisition of skills in the area of literacy by the teachers of Higher Education;

4. To create synergies between Higher Education Institutions and the principal actors in the field of film literacy in Portugal, namely the Cinemateca Portuguesa, Cineclubes and the National Cinema Plan itself;

5. To favor the integration of literacies in environments of pedagogical innovation in Higher Education;

6. Contribute to the rapprochement between Higher Education teachers and literacy;

7. Contribute to the consolidation of the critical thinking of Higher Education students regarding the challenges of contemporary society by increasing literacy skills;

8. To foster film literacy in the environments of pedagogical innovation in Higher Education;

9. Enable the acquisition of skills on film literacy, in particular, to the teachers of Higher Education;

10. To provide students with the possibility of using film literacy for an exercise in critical analysis and interpretation of the current information, image and digital society.

We believe that this manifesto is connected in perfect union with the apology of pedagogical innovation in Higher Education and the contribution of the literacies that we have projectively finished. Moreover, looking at Higher Education as the club of living poets, we establish as our motto the title of this communication (Education, Pedagogy and Literacy: the challenges and horizons of film literacy), so that we can see the future as a clear and irrefutable symbiosis between the society of the 21st Century and the spaces of teaching-learning (formal and non-formal). On the other hand, we also choose the deeper meaning of the Greek word "poet" ("the creator"), in order to create new perspectives on pedagogical innovation, in this

open, inspired and inspiring, daring and lively club, allowing each one of we can continue to tell your students, as did Professor Keating at the *Dead Poets Society*:

*Now in my class you will learn to think for yourselves again.*

*You will learn to savor words and language.*

*No matter what anybody tells you, words and ideas can change the world.*

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