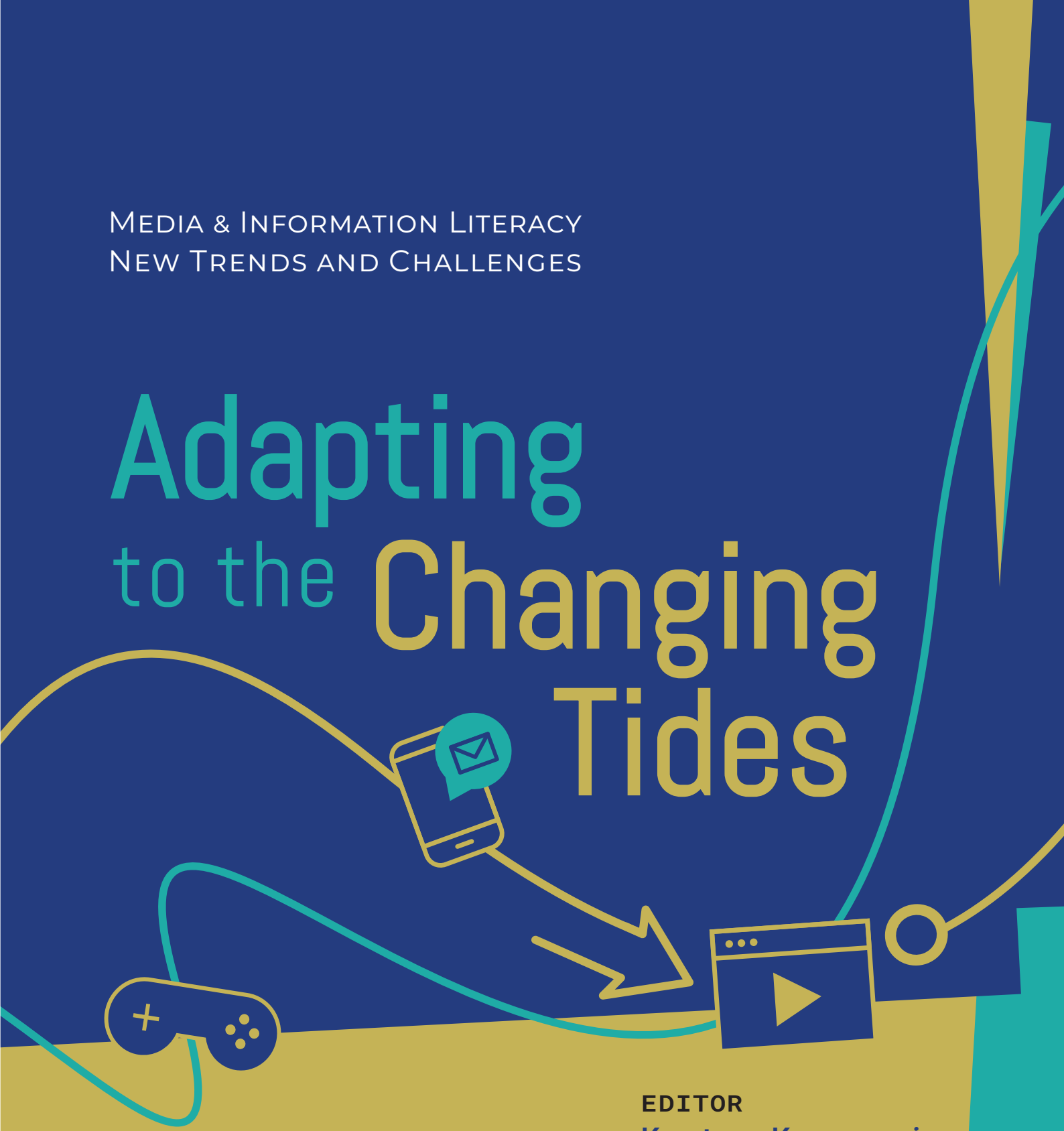
Media & Information Literacy
New Trends and Challenges

Adapting to the Changing Tides



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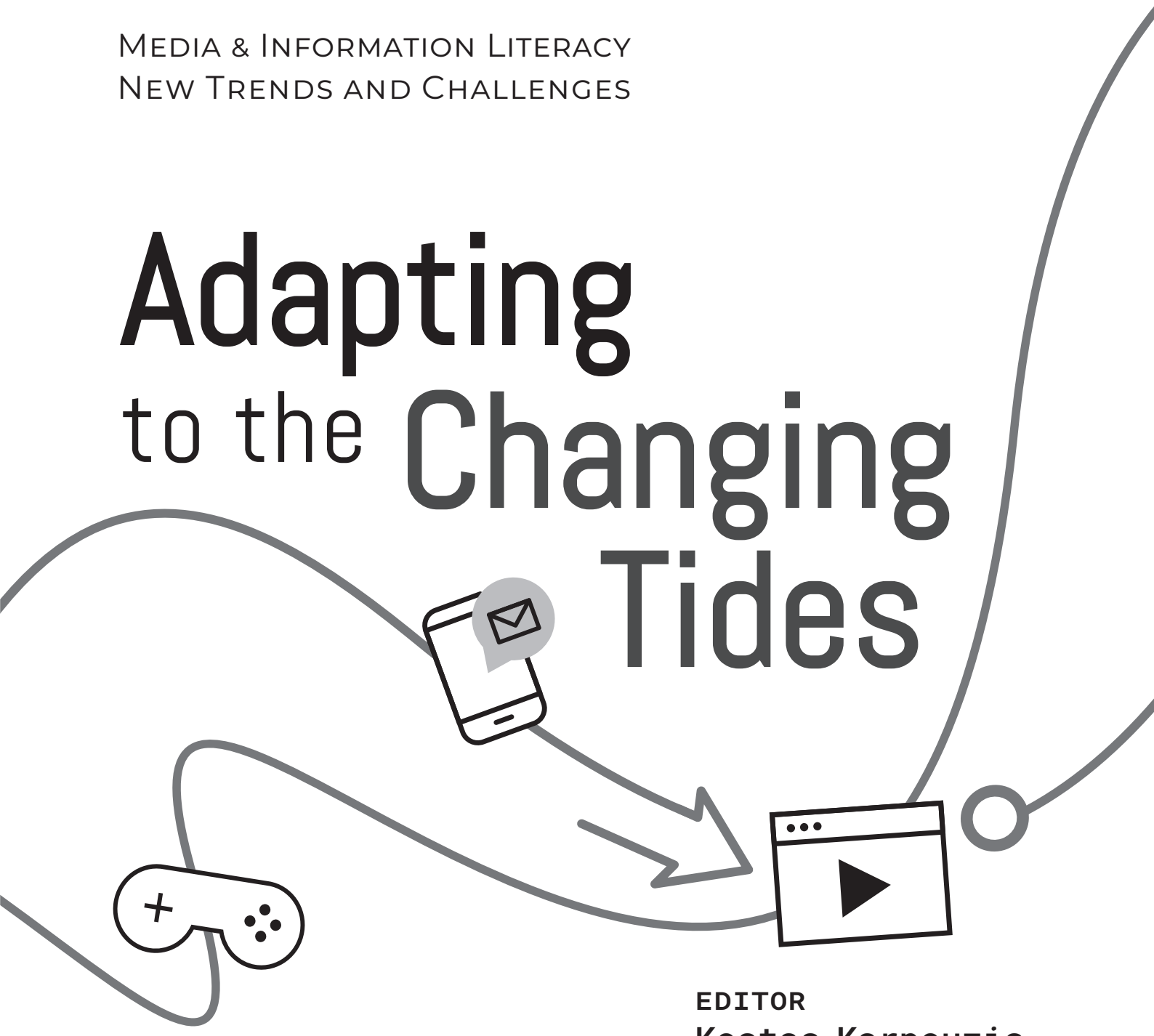

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The present publication was based on the initiative of the Department of Audiovisual Education and Research, headed at the time by Mrs Ir. Andriopoulou, for the collection of articles on media policies and practices in post-pandemic era, within the framework of the EU Sub Chapter Mediterranean Group of UNESCO MIL Alliance and the UNESCO Global MIL Week 2022.

The final edition is enriched and edited under the scientific supervision of Prof. K. Karpouzis, with the contribution of the following EKOME members:

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Contents

PREFACE

AS WE NAVIGATE the dynamic currents of the sea of media, the National Centre of Audiovisual Media and Communication - EKOME presents with keen excitement a collection of articles by scholars from around the globe, with the title **"Adapting to the Changing Tides: Media & Information Literacy New Trends and Challenges"**.

All of us in the National Centre of Audiovisual Media and Communication, committed to the purpose of supporting audiovisual production, promoting audiovisual education, and safeguarding audiovisual heritage, assign a high priority to further encouraging the discourse on media literacy that spans borders and transcends cultural boundaries. In today's rapidly changing world, media education plays a fundamental role in advancing ideas and in contributing to fields such as digital literacy, informed citizenship, social cohesion, intercultural understanding, and democratic dialogue.

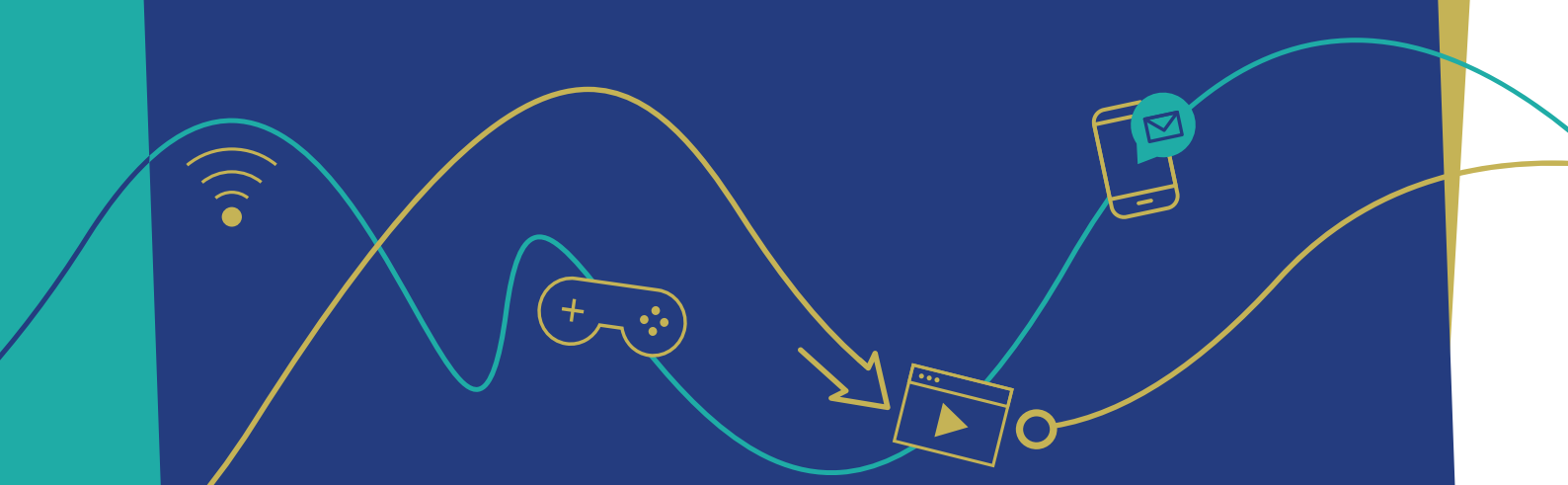
It is, therefore, a great privilege to invite academics, researchers, and media enthusiasts to explore the diverse and crucial perspectives presented within the pages of this anthology. The articles included unravel the numerous and multifaceted aspects of contemporary media and information literacy, such as the dissemination and accessibility of film education, the digital citizenship connected to social justice issues, the educational role of television, the post-covid media challenges and cyber dangers.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to all the contributors whose insightful research enriches this book.

May this volume serve as a resource for critical thinking and an inspiration for constructive conversation and advancement while enabling organizations and individuals to adapt to the ever-changing tides of a media-rich world.

Leonidas Christopoulos

President and CEO, EKOME



Digital Hospitality Lab: empowering educators through digital literacy – a case study from Guatemala

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ABSTRACT

Digital Hospitality Lab is an educational association created in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic by a multidisciplinary group from Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay with the aim to implement actions to improve digital literacy and reduce educational inequalities. In 2021, the group started a collaborative work, invited by the Comparte Onlus foundation (Italy), to develop digital skills and innovative pedagogical practices with professors who train teachers at San Carlos University in Petén, Guatemala. Initially, the focus of actions were workshops on digital tools to overcome the obstacles of social distancing and promote more student engagement. In 2022, the training process focused on creating, transforming, and applying lesson plans using digital competences. The training design elaborated by the members of the laboratory provided a cascade effect beyond the transfer of technical-pedagogical knowledge, providing empowerment in active, critical, and inclusive learning strategies. These experiences have indicated some trends: i) the strength of interdisciplinary and multicultural actions for Media and Information Literacy (MIL); ii) the value of supporting university professors who train teachers; iii) the importance of practical activities combine with mentoring; iv) the empowerment of teacher by MIL has repercussions on creative and critical actions in their students.

Keywords: Media Information Literacy; Digital training teacher; Digital Hospitality; Higher Education; COVID-19 pandemic

INTRODUCTION

"Teaching demands confidence, professional competence and generosity"

Paulo Freire[1]

During the Covid-19 pandemic, teacher training challenges in the use of digital technologies in their pedagogical practices became more evident and urgent. Connectivity and digital skills have emerged as major barriers in various dimensions of the educational process: from basic schooling to higher education. According to the "Global Connectivity Report 2022", published by International Communication Union (ITU), the pandemic crisis has exacerbated the effects of digital exclusion. Access to education, work, health care, purchasing, entertainment, and social life during the lockdown period was possible for those with fast connectivity and some specific digital skills. However, for others, many aspects of their lives were substantially affected, particularly for children and youth who have been deprived of essential educational services because of school closure (ITU, 2023).

Latin America was the region where schools were closed, totally or partially, for the longest time during the pandemic crisis. According to a report published by the *Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe* (CEPAL), this was about 56 weeks. As a result, almost 15.000.000 students were deprived of their right of learning (CEPAL, 2022). In 2020, concerned about the global and local state of education, a group of professionals from diverse fields started working together, to address the challenges in their respective countries. This multidisciplinary group inspired by the concept of Digital Hospitality developed by Henríquez (2021) has created the Digital Hospitality Education Lab. The lab is a collective space and virtual learning community to implement initiatives to improve digital literacy and reduce educational inequalities.

The meetings to share experiences of the Covid-19 pandemic challenges in the field of education in Latin America gradually evolved into structured collaborative efforts that combined knowledge, skills, and experiences from disciplines such as psychology, communication, informatics, computational

1. Freire, P. (1996, p. 102)

science, pedagogy, and philosophy. Furthermore, since the same year of its foundation, the Digital Hospitality Education Lab is part of the UNESCO Media and Information Alliance.

The concept of digital hospitality is initially understood, as *"[a] reflective approach based on hermeneutics and as a philosophical-educational proposal that allows to address the various categories that arise in the context of an advanced digital era and to reduce the current digital divide and one of its main effects, digital illiteracy, which brings other consequences in society, such as those experienced dramatically in the context of the pandemic."* (Henríquez, 2021, p.64)

The promotion of competencies for the use of communication technologies and critical understanding of information disseminated by the media has been part of UNESCO's initiatives over the last 40 years. During this period, several terms were present in their statements and documents. In the 1950s, the expression "media literacy" emerged because of the expansion of television sets and the concerns about media manipulation. In the 1970s, the term "information literacy" amplified the previous notions. In the 1990s, with people's increasing access to personal computers, mobile phones, and the internet, expressions such as "computer literacy" and "digital literacy" gained prominence (UNESCO, 2021). However, since 2008, to unify and create an umbrella concept, UNESCO has adopted the term media and information literacy (MIL) "which covers interdependent and convergent competencies for engaging with communications and content via institutions such as libraries, the media and internet companies" (UNESCO, 2021, p. 7)

DIGITAL LITERACY AND DIGITAL SKILLS

Although digital literacy has various interpretations, the most common is Gilster's (1997) which indicates the ability of people to understand and use information from digital sources in problem-solving (Reyes & Avello-Martínez, 2021). This definition has traditionally been linked to education. Currently, a person is considered digitally literate when he or she is able to interface with technological devices, interacting in virtual spaces (Reyes, 2020). It should be noted that the definition is expanding to some specific skills in the educational field,

becoming a referred competency, such as designing technology-based activities and network collaboration, among others. These have been defined by different frameworks for the educational use of technology, such as the European Framework (Reis et al., 2019).

For the systematic development of this digital competency in teaching, various frameworks have been created, with the most widely used being DigComEdu (European framework for digital competency of teachers), while a theoretical model for teachers' digital competence development is TPACK (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge). By establishing different intersections in the way technology can support pedagogical and disciplinary aspects, the TPACK model refers to the relationships between the content knowledge associated with what is taught, the pedagogical knowledge associated with how it is taught, and the technological knowledge describing the digital skills required by teachers (Cabero Almenara et al., 2015).

The European framework for teachers' digital competences is articulated through 6 competencies that they should have in the digital field: professional commitment, digital resources, digital pedagogy, evaluation and feedback, students' empowerment, and facilitation of students' digital competences (Cabero-Almenara et al., 2020). In the Latin American context, it has been generally evidenced that teachers possess a technical use of technology, especially for accessing information, but they lack the ability to innovate with it, making it necessary to generate inter-university spaces (e.g., in virtual mode, Tobar & Lozado, 2021), to train and share experiences.

Even though internet connectivity rates have increased in the last decade, from 29 percent in 2010 to 63 percent in 2021 (ITU, 2022), the low level of Information Communication Technology (ICT) skills has been a barrier to socially meaningful and beneficial connectivity. Information collected from 78 countries based on five categories of skills (communication/ collaboration; problem-solving; safety; content creation; information literacy) has identified that a significant portion of the population uses the Internet without social benefits and without knowing how to avoid risks (ITU, 2022). The lack of educational benefits is linked to the low ICT skills, especially in information data literacy and critical competencies.

For this reason, it is important to overcome the myth that digital natives develop technological competencies on their own. The systematic teaching of ICT is ever more necessary to prevent children and youth from becoming mere passive consumers of the entertainment industry. In this sense, innovative teacher training that promotes the digital youth protagonist with critical awareness and digital civility is essential for the new democratic future (Prioste, 2019).

Therefore, the aim of this article is to describe an experience of digital skills development and innovative pedagogical practices with university professors in Guatemala who train future teachers. These professors faced difficulties in conducting their classes in the pandemic and post-pandemic context, mainly due to the lack of digital competencies and the digital divide in this country.

CASE DESCRIPTION AND METHODOLOGY

Guatemala has structural and historical problems of inequalities when it comes to access to education, which have worsened during the pandemic period. This divide does not only have to do with access but includes student permanence and quality of education. These problems affect especially the rural and indigenous populations, and communities in situations of poverty and social vulnerabilities. Access to basic education reaches almost 100% of the 7-year-old population; however, starting from the age of 13, many adolescents drop out of school. At the age of 16, only 54,1% attend school, at 17, the number drops to 43,7%, and at 18, only 26,5% are still in school. The pandemic crisis has deepened these difficulties, while, at the same time, illustrated the necessity to universalize access and support the use of the Internet, computers, and ICT devices in Guatemala. Furthermore, the pandemic period reveals the importance of access to ICT to be supported by training and guidance strategies for teachers (Lovo, 2022).

This case study was carried out in Petén, the largest of Guatemala's 22 Departments (about one third of the country's surface area). In the north of Petén, in the municipality of Santa Elena, is located the CUDEP centre, one of the 18 college campuses of the Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala (USAC). USAC is the fourth oldest university in America, having been founded

in 1676 and is the only public university of the country. The three times centenary Universidad de San Carlos has gone through several stages: it currently serves 146.299 students facing many challenges. During the pandemic, many processes have been technology-enabled (e.g., tuition payments can now be made online), but if the USAC campus in the capital was able to offer free wireless internet access, the situation is quite different in rural areas. According to the data of the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC): between Q.10.00 and Q.30.00 is spent daily to connect to the internet for educational purposes, when a high percentage of Guatemalans live with Q.28.00 per day (COPADEH, 2022). Furthermore, according to Johnson y Gálvez-Sobra''s (2020) study, more than 70% of teachers in the country were not sufficiently competent to integrate technology into the teaching-learning process.

The idea of a faculties' workshop, promoted by *Hospitalidad Digital* and *Comparte Onlus*, addressed the need to develop teachers' digital skills. Besides the importance that mastering digital skills is an essential requirement for teaching (UNESCO, 2011), faculty of the University San Carlos of Guatemala in Petén had the urgent necessity of handling some digital resources to keep teaching in a pandemic condition of social isolation. The initiative is part of the *Comparte Universidad* project that *Comparte Onlus* has been developing for 4 years in collaboration with CUDEP, in Guatemala. Indeed, *Comparte* is a cultural association (ONLUS stands for Non-Profit Organisation of Social Utility) that since 2018 has been supporting the quality of education in the rural areas of Guatemala through the *Comparte* Universidad project, which is based on an exchange and training network between Europe and Latin America (Culcasi et al., 2021).

The period 2021-2022 was considered for this study: the workshop was divided into two modules: the first one was focused on distance education strategies and technological tools, with 62 participants (Table 1); the second one was focused on hybrid education with 14 participants who achieved their pedagogical plans (Table 2). Both had a practical approach with a theoretical baseline that guided all the 8 synchronous meetings led by the multidisciplinary group of Digital Hospitality.

Table 1. Module 1: content and approach (2021)

Content	Approach
Education strategies for virtual environments	Theoretical
Digital Hospitality and the digital gap	Theoretical
Designing digital interactive presentations	Hands-on
Designing digital interactive presentations	Hands-on
Designing virtual learning environment	Hands-on
Designing virtual learning environment	Hands-on
Evaluating groups in a virtual environment	Theoretical
Individual evaluation in a virtual environment	Theoretical

The main goal of the workshop was to develop specific competences: the creation of digital learning objects (DLOs) and digital lesson planning, digital self-learning autonomy. For this goal, the definition adopted for DLOs is "learning activities in digital form, which teachers can use to introduce Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in the educational process." (Poultsakis et al. 2021).

To develop these competences, the sessions were organised starting with content about the theoretical definition and framework of digital hospitality, learning distance, and hybrid education, followed by practical digital tools exercises. The training concluded with the participants designing and implementing a technology-based lesson plan, with mentoring led by Digital Hospitality members.

The methodology was based on mentoring, developed through virtual workshops and webinars, as well as virtual work through a platform to review the participants' work proposals. In this sense, mentoring is considered an appropriate strategy for peer work because it allows the teaching and learning process to be personalised, adapting to the possibilities of each participant (Sánchez Cabezas et al., 2019), also producing learning and socio-emotional results cooperatively, in a supportive and trustworthy environment (Gradaille

Ramas & Gradaille Martín, 2020). Mentorships provide a space for mutual trust and more personalised support, helping professors to integrate their prior knowledge with confidence to create new ways of teaching.

Table 2. Module 2 content and approach (2022)

What is hybrid education	Theoretical
Education strategies for hybrid education	Theoretical
Creating digital learning objects	Hands-on
Creating digital learning objects	Hands-on
Creating a lesson plan	Mentoring
Appling the lesson plan	Mentoring
Evaluating the lesson plan	Mentoring
Results presentation	Mentoring

In 2022, the training process focused on creating, transforming, and applying lesson plans using digital competences. Detailed pedagogical planning and the choice of digital resources suited to the objectives and profile of the students is a fundamental stage of that work. At the beginning of the process, teachers received a guide for planning and evaluating their hybrid pedagogical activities. The worksheet had the following topics: i) objectives: teachers were asked to explain the purposes of the activities and what would be the final results expected after execution by their students; ii) step-by-step description of each activity; iii) online, hybrid, or face-to-face modality; iv) specification of the digital resources used and explanation of the reasons for this choice; v) evaluation of the process including a description of the evaluation modality (co-evaluation, hetero-evaluation, self-evaluation), type of instruments used, pedagogical results achieved and the effectiveness of the digital resources used. All teachers stated that they were able to implement the activity plans with their students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this article, the analysis was based on the data obtained in the second module from both: the lesson plans prepared by the faculty, and their answers to the final evaluation forms. The results highlight an increase in teachers' and students' digital skills and the improvement of MIL, in accordance with the hypotheses indicated in the UNESCO guiding documents (2011, 2019). Thus, a pertinence of the training strategies adopted by the Digital Hospitality group is revealed, suggesting some innovations in the pedagogical practices. The didactics plans elaborated by the professors through mentorships present a varied repertoire of activities that are relevant to MIL and linked with global and regional problems. Analysing the objectives of the didactic plans, three categories of skills developed by both educators and students emerge: i) communication, learning, and collaboration competences; ii) digital literacy and content creation; iii) socio-cultural problems and media-information literacy.

Examples of objectives concerning communication and collaboration competences are stimulating the ability to innovate, collaborate, and communicate using technologies; expanding prior knowledge and access to new knowledge; encouraging team teaching-learning; strengthening the understanding of topics covered in the curriculum.

Regarding digital literacy and content creation or the development of abilities to handle technical tools, we highlight: the creation of animated videos; the use of learning platforms such as Moodle; the access and manipulation of research databases; the use of open code software; the preparation of spreadsheets; the use of applications for diagramming documents; the use of learning resources for disseminating videos and educational content through social networks.

Concerning socio-cultural and media-informational literacy goals, educators developed: activities to raise awareness of the environment; logical thinking; popular education; the history of Guatemala; creation and dissemination of educational content; and development of critical skills for analysing information disseminated in digital environments.

The most frequent words in the lesson plan objectives suggest that the teachers focus on student learning, as shown in the word cloud: students, learning, educational, themes, collaborative, knowledge, resources, tools, communication, teaching-learning among others.

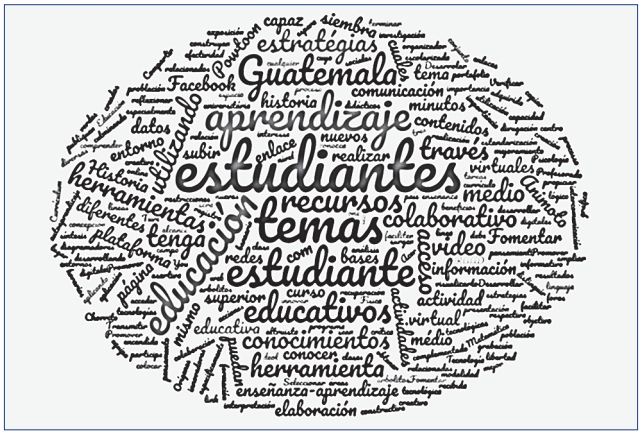

Figure 1. Lesson planning objectives word cloud

Despite the positive empirical evidence, participants faced some challenges during both modules resulting in an engagement instability. At the synchronous meeting, most of them did not open the cameras, and rarely participated in the discussions proposed by the instructor. In some meetings, the attendance was low due to the lack of electric energy or internet access caused by storms or other events in the region. Beside this, some participants used the computer reserved for all the family, thus mostly attended the meeting through their mobile phones, hampering the practical exercises. As we can see, the reason for the engagement instability was determined by infrastructure problems and lack of time rather than a lack of interest in ICT, as pointed out Fernández-Márquez et al. (2018).

In the second module, 14 professors had finished the lesson plan by the mentoring process. In the evaluation form, 86% of professors answered that they learned different tools thanks to the training. The tools mentioned by professors were: Genially, Moodle, Flaticon, Canva, Google Tools, PowerPoint, and some applications for making videos, forums, and portfolio creation. A professor explains: “It’s not about the tool itself, but the ways to use it in our classes”. Another professor comments that his/her students apparently know some

digital applications, but they frequently ignore different resources, and they don't know how to use them for pedagogical purposes. Another participant said: "The workshop motivated me to implement digital tools with my students that I only used to build presentations, but not in activities that involve them". Regarding digital literacy, another participant highlighted that the workshop "was interesting, because they could publish important information on social networks, making their classes a massive education channel".

All participants in the second module could develop competence in digital lesson planning, as all of them proposed a sequence of digital activities to apply with their students. For some of these lessons, 8 educators created their own DLOs, indicating that 57% could develop the competence of creating digital learning objects. In addition, 10 professors proposed that their students create their DLOs as a pedagogical activity, showing a positive outcome impacting not only the participants but also their students.

The assessments of the second module indicated that all training sessions were useful, nevertheless, some of these were most relevant to teachers' practice as seen in table 3. The meetings that proposed practical activities for creation of digital objects were cited by 86% of the participants, followed by the theoretical session about hybrid education (79%) and strategies for hybrid education (64%). Mentoring sessions were also mentioned by faculty, especially the one regarding the presentation of the pedagogical plan.

Table 3. Evaluation form filled by participants about the most relevant thematic in their work

Creating digital learning objects	86 %
What is hybrid education?	79 %
Strategies for a hybrid education	64 %
Mentoring: presentation of lesson plans	64 %
Mentoring: thinking about the pedagogical objective	43 %
Evaluating the lesson plan	36 %

These results reveal the importance for teachers to obtain practical and theoretical knowledge that provides new teaching-learning resources with the use of digital technologies, as evidenced by the TPACK model (Cabero Almenara et al., 2015). Moreover, we conclude that technical competence is just one of the aspects that must be integrated into the mastery of socially relevant content and the professors' ability to establish a trusting and learning relationship with their students.

Teachers' and student's empowerment, in Paulo Freire's perspective, is a process resulting from dialogic activities, critical reflection on teaching practices, respect for ideas interchange and, finally, the recognition of historical-cultural forces that limit social transformations (Freire, 1996). The assessment of the second module demonstrated that the professors had the opportunity to reflect on their practices and transform them, creating communities of learning with their students, and expanding the transmission of scientific and cultural information beyond the walls of the university. On top of that, the work's follow-up suggests more digital self-learning autonomy whereby some students became agents of the creation and dissemination of educational relevant content.

CONCLUSIONS

What have we learned from this experience? At first, we identified the strength of interdisciplinary and multicultural actions for Media and Information Literacy (MIL). The variety of knowledge from different fields and cultures is crucial to solve complex problems. Secondly, the value of supporting university professors who train teachers, because when they improve the quality of teaching it can produce beneficial results on other generations, as a cascade effect. Thirdly, the importance of practical activities combined with mentoring in teacher training. Mentorship in small groups can promote more personal support, the sharing of ideas for solving problems and above all, helping professors in self-confidence. Finally, the empowerment of future teachers by MIL can have repercussions on creative and critical actions in their students.

Importantly, it was the strengthening of teaching-learning bonds during the training sessions rather than digital objects per se that stimulated the teachers' empowerment. Briefly, the key to this training process was the opportunity to improve relationships by sharing different expertise and transmission of some relevant knowledge between the team of trainers, professors and their students. This approach, in an interdisciplinary and multicultural perspective, was made possible thanks to internet connectivity and digital tools, but also to the sum of the skills and collaboration of the lab members and the support of institutions such as Comparte Onlus.

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"This book covers a wide range of applications and contexts illustrating the importance of Media and Information Literacy (MIL) in the post-pandemic era. [...]. A common "thread" across all chapters is the emergence of MIL not just as a skill or competency, but as a fundamental human right. The ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create information is intrinsic to the exercise of free expression, informed citizenship, and personal empowerment. In an era where information is as vital as any traditional resource, ensuring equitable access to and understanding of this information becomes a matter of social justice and human dignity. MIL, in its essence, equips individuals with the tools to engage critically with the media and information they encounter, fostering not only personal enlightenment but also the health of democratic societies."

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