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STUDENT-LED DIGITAL JOURNALISM AS A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT: THE EU GREEN TOUR E-MAGAZINE EXPERIENCE

1. Introduction

The design of digital learning environments contributes to shaping the ways in which learning is organised, the practices that support it, and the opportunities for participation that they create. Alongside immersive solutions, virtual environments and Artificial Intelligence-based tools, digital environments can also take the form of open spaces for production, collaboration and publication, where learning activities develop through practices directed towards real contexts and audiences. From this perspective, attention shifts from technologies themselves to the ways in which learning environments are designed and to the opportunities for participation and production that they enable.

This perspective finds an important point of reference in studies on media literacy and participatory culture. Buckingham defines media literacy as the ability to access, analyse, evaluate and create media messages [1]. Complementing this view, Hobbs draws attention to the role of media production as a practice that fosters participation, critical reflection and engagement in communication processes [2]. Similarly, Jenkins highlights how digital environments can support forms of participation based on the creation and sharing of user-generated content [7].

The relevance of these perspectives becomes particularly evident when addressing complex issues that require critical engagement with information and informed participation in public debate. In this regard, GreenComp and DigComp emphasise critical thinking, agency, digital content creation and responsible participation in digital environments [3;4]. These dimensions become even more significant within information ecosystems increasingly shaped by Artificial Intelligence. The use of AI-based tools in processes of research, content development and content production requires critical reflection on the reliability of information, the transparency of sources and the ethical implications associated with content creation [5].

Within this context, the Erasmus+ EU Green Tour project explores the potential of student-led digital journalism as an educational setting for addressing sustainability-related issues and the responsible use of emerging technologies. A central element of the project is the international EU Green Tour e-magazine, an online magazine led by students and dedicated to sustainability and local development. The e-magazine

represents the point of convergence between the educational activities developed within the project and their translation into journalistic products intended for a real audience.

This paper presents the EU Green Tour e-magazine and examines its role as a pedagogical device capable of integrating these dimensions within a shared educational experience.

2. The eu green tour project educational approach

EU Green Tour is an Erasmus+ Cooperation Partnership involving organisations from Italy, Greece, Sweden and Ukraine. The project aims to promote sustainability education through the integration of media literacy, digital competences and the responsible use of emerging technologies.

At the centre of the project's educational approach is the concept of the "eco-digital creator", understood as a learner capable of investigating environmental issues, critically evaluating information, producing digital content and communicating sustainability-related topics through responsible media practices. This concept reflects the growing need to connect sustainability education with active participation in contemporary digital environments.

To translate these principles into educational practice, the project developed an interdisciplinary curriculum and a training programme implemented in partner and associated schools. The activities involved more than 200 students and addressed topics such as journalism and media literacy in the age of climate change, ethics and responsibility in journalism, and the use of Artificial Intelligence in green journalism. Part of the programme was dedicated to the opportunities and challenges associated with AI-supported content creation. Students discussed issues such as source reliability, transparency, misinformation and the ethical implications of using AI tools in journalistic communication.

3. The e-magazine as a student-led digital learning environment

The EU Green Tour e-magazine represents the main pedagogical innovation developed within the project. Designed as an international online magazine dedicated to sustainability and local development, it provides students with a shared digital space for content creation, publication and dissemination. The platform hosts articles and other digital contributions produced by students, making their work accessible beyond the classroom and enabling interaction with readers outside the school context through online communication.

The educational design of the e-magazine is consistent with approaches to authentic learning, which emphasise the importance of engaging learners in meaningful tasks connected to real-world contexts and audiences [6]. Students identify topics of interest,

investigate sustainability-related issues, gather information and transform their findings into journalistic content published through the e-magazine. In this process, they take on the role of journalists, authors and content creators while developing communication skills, critical thinking and responsible digital practices through direct experience in media production. Student agency represents a significant dimension of this learning environment. Participants play an active role in editorial decision-making, from the selection of topics to the development of published content, assuming responsibility for the material they produce and share through the e-magazine.

Publication constitutes a central component of the learning experience. Because articles are disseminated through an openly accessible platform, student work reaches readers beyond the immediate educational context. This public dimension encourages greater attention to information quality, source verification and audience awareness.

The e-magazine also supports an interdisciplinary approach to learning. Sustainability-related topics are explored through articles, interviews, reports and multimedia contributions that connect environmental, social, cultural and economic dimensions. Journalistic production provides a space in which knowledge acquired across different subject areas can be applied, communicated and discussed.

The international nature of the platform further enriches the educational experience. By sharing a common digital space, students from different countries contribute perspectives rooted in their local contexts while engaging with broader sustainability challenges.

Within this shared environment, journalistic practice brings together sustainability education, media literacy and AI literacy. Participants evaluate information sources, communicate responsibly and reflect on the implications of AI-supported content creation.

4. Educational opportunities and reflections

The first implementation phase of the e-magazine suggests several reflections that extend beyond the development of specific competences. A first aspect concerns the position students occupy within the learning process. The experience places them in an intermediate space between learning and cultural production, as participants contribute to the creation and dissemination of content through concrete journalistic practices. In this sense, journalism is both an object of learning and a means through which learning takes shape.

A second reflection concerns the role of the digital environment. In the case of the e-magazine, digital technologies are used to support collaboration, editorial work and the circulation of content across different educational and national contexts. The digital

dimension therefore functions less as a space for simulation and more as a framework that enables participation in shared journalistic activities.

The experience also highlights the potential of journalism as a way of engaging with complex issues. Sustainability-related topics become the subject of investigation, interpretation and public discussion, requiring students to move beyond the simple acquisition of information and engage with processes of inquiry and representation.

Finally, the integration of Artificial Intelligence within this context raises questions that are closely connected to journalistic practice itself. Issues related to reliability, transparency and responsibility emerge in relation to the production and use of information, encouraging reflection on the implications of AI within contemporary information environments.

5. Conclusions

The experience presented in this paper highlights the central role of the e-magazine within the EU Green Tour project. More than a publishing platform or a final project output, the e-magazine operates as a pedagogical device that connects different dimensions of the educational pathway, providing a common framework within which training activities, journalistic production and international collaboration can develop in an integrated manner. From this perspective, the significance of the experience lies in the way the e-magazine brings together elements that are often addressed separately within educational contexts. Sustainability-related issues, journalistic practices and reflection on emerging technologies are situated within the same educational setting and become part of a shared process of inquiry and content production. The experience demonstrates the feasibility of this approach and provides an example of how digital journalism can function as an organising principle for educational activities. In this respect, the value of the e-magazine extends beyond the content it hosts, deriving from its capacity to structure relationships between learning activities, journalistic practice and collaboration across different national contexts.

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ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN EDUCATION: BETWEEN PERSONALIZATION AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Artificial intelligence (AI) has become one of the most influential technologies shaping contemporary education. The rapid development of AI-powered tools, particularly generative artificial intelligence (GenAI), has transformed teaching, learning, assessment, and educational management worldwide. AI technologies provide new opportunities for personalizing learning, supporting educators, and increasing access to educational resources. At the same time, their widespread adoption raises important questions concerning academic integrity, ethical use, and the preservation of critical thinking skills among learners [2].

The Ukrainian educational system represents a particularly interesting case of AI integration. Unlike many countries, Ukraine experienced accelerated digital transformation under the influence of several overlapping crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges caused by the full-scale war. These circumstances forced educational institutions to adopt digital technologies rapidly and to develop flexible approaches capable of ensuring educational continuity under conditions of uncertainty and disruption. As a result, AI technologies gradually evolved from optional digital tools into important instruments of educational resilience.