Cyberbullying:
The threat without a face

Ciberacoso: La amenaza sin rostro

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Subject Editors

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Focus

Since the emergence of the widespread use of ICT among young people, already considered digital natives, risky behaviour has been observed. On the one hand, to the users themselves who often do not appreciate the vastness of the World Wide Web where they publish personal information, sometimes intimate in nature, which can be used to their detriment; and, on the other hand, due to the vulnerability of being "connected" and becoming a subject exposed to different aggressions. ICT has such a strong appeal among young people as a form of fun that it is often mixed-up with bullying, supported by the idea that 'it is not important, 'it is only entertainment', thus providing some of the components needed to assault as they pass through space and time. The attacks are perpetrated anonymously and in a forum which can be shared by thousands of followers, easily allowing their transition from being a mere spectator to an actor, thereby increasing the vulnerability of the victim.

Increasingly, it has been observed, that the incorporation of information and communication technologies into relational violence is having wide repercussions: firstly because of the number of subjects involved in any given aggression which is exponentially multiplied by the scenarios in which abuse and aggression are recorded, secondly, because a specific physical space is no longer needed, and, thirdly, for the average duration of the action, which is sometimes almost impossible to delete. Not forgetting that violence through ICT can take a wide range of forms.

The phenomenon of bullying is considered to be a form of intentional, harmful and persistent abuse by a student or group of students towards another companion who is generally weaker and who becomes their habitual victim. It is violent and persistent behaviour of a type that once a relationship of intimidation has been established, a conspiracy is generated within the peer group that reinforces their capacity to arouse fear. At present, these assumptions are undergoing a profound change in the forms of aggression, types of scenarios and range of protagonists, since the abuse can be carried out in a "virtual" way, without the need for "face to face" contact. We are facing the phenomenon known as "cyberbullying". Behind it the aggressor/aggressors and the victim are located in remote spaces, avoiding visual contact, and in scenarios which provide an anonymity whose consequence is the absence of any perception of the damage caused. In contrast with the victim on whom the effects can be devastating, since there is no escape.

Adolescence and emerging adulthood (12-20 years old) seems to be the age where these acts of cyberbullying are most seen to occur but it is increasingly a phenomenon that occurs at earlier ages, reason why it is advisable to start studies covering the period of 8-11 years old. At the same time, other variables such as gender, school level, nationality, use of ICT and participation in social networks, role played (aggressor, victim, observer), parental supervision, membership of a vulnerable group or special educational needs, are all factors in the bullying phenomena. Facing cyberbullying another focus of study should concentrate on teachers training and schools organization regarding its detection, as well as on possible programs and strategies that can be used in the school, family and social context in order to combat this scourge.

The monograph presented is intended to investigate at the empirical level the issues indicated in order to advance knowledge of the nature, impact, detection, prevention and application of educational programs which facilitate the understanding of the risks of using ICT from the very adverse phenomenon of cyberbullying and find ways of solving this problem.

Descriptors

- Nature of cyberbullying.
- Strategies for detection.
- Varieties used.
- Associated variables: age, gender, origin.
- Risk and vulnerability factors.
- Perception of its impact. Medium and long-term effects.
- Prevention and early intervention educational programs.

Questions

Some questions and reflections araised by this monograph related to its thematic lines are:

- The risks of using the Internet on adolescents. Can we control these risks? And if so, who should do it?

- Legal measures against cyberbullying, are being increasingly demanded and we already have some legal regulations in this regard. But to what extent are they effective and improve control of the problem? In addition, the great challenge of victim recuperation.

- If ICT makes it possible to supplant personalities, "hide" and blur responsibility, can we claim that ICT facilitates violence?

- Focusing on cyberbullying, it would be necessary to determine if it has specific characteristics compared with those of traditional bullying and, therefore, if intervention programs should also be specific and with digital support.

- Knowledge of cyberbullying and its consequences are necessary as a means of raising the general population's awareness and, especially as a preliminary phase, for the design of effective prevention and action programs.

Finally, we intend to collect proposals that allow us to confront cyberbullying in educational centres.

About the subject Editors

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Professor of Didactics and School Organization at the University of Murcia, Coordinator of the Education Sciences Area of the State Research Agency and Director of the Inclusive Education Research Group: School for All (E073-02) at the same University. She teaches subjects related to Inclusive Education in the Faculty of Education at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Worthy of note is her participation in Masters and PhD courses in different Universities in Europe, the United States and Latin America, showing her recognition on an international level. The publications of Professor Arnaiz are numerous. She has contributed to more than 100 books and her numerous works have appeared in both national and international articles. Her work is dedicated to disseminating her epistemological reflections on Special Education - Inclusive Education and attention to vulnerable groups and to disseminate the results of her research. These focus on the area of attention to diversity and inclusive education, essentially covered by different R & D & I projects, which develop, among others, self-assessment tools for education centers which use an inclusive approach, programs and proposals for the improvement for attention to diversity in education centers, work strategies in the classroom and teacher training. It is also worth mentioning her wide participation in management positions. She has been Director of the Department of Didactics and School Organization in which role she is attached to several legislatures, Director of the Pedagogical Training Course for Secondary Education teachers, and Director of numerous courses and conferences, Vice-rector of European Innovation and Convergence and Vice-Rector of International Relations and Innovation at the University of Murcia.

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Professor of the Faculty of Physical Education at the State University of Campinas (Brazil). She teaches Physical Education at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels and works on the Master's and Doctorate Program in the area of research Physical Education and Society. Her investigations are in the line of School Physical Education with axes in School violence, Games and Teacher Training. She coordinates the Study Groups: Research Group on Violence (GEPEVs) (https://goo.gl/UYsE7B) and EscolaR (Group of Studies on Physical School Education) (https://goo.gl/1eypBl), both at FEF-Unicamp. It is worth mentioning her extensive experience in administration. She has been a degree coordinator at the Faculty of Physical Education for six years. She acts as Coordinator of the Management of Educational Issues of the Institutional Teacher Training Induction Program (PIBID) Unicamp. She Acts as State Secretary of the Brazilian College of Sports Sciences, CBCE-SP, 2016-18 management. Among her publications are studies related to coexistence and school violence, articles on bullying in Brazilian schools, on socio-family variables related to violence in adolescent students, on play as a form of intervention for the improvement of coexistence and various book chapters on interpersonal relationships and violence in schools.

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PhD in Psychology. Tenured lecture of Educational Psychology at the University of Murcia. Lead researcher of the research group EIPSED-E042-01 (Research Team in Educational Psychology). She teaches undergraduate and Master degrees in Psychology and Criminology. Her investigations are in the line of: school violence; adolescence and its problems and teacher training. She collaborates with the Institute of Social Services

Department of the Region of Murcia for the elaboration of protocols for the evaluation of abused children and other associations related to childhood and bullying. She is a member of the Observatory for the Development of Coexistence in the Region of Murcia. She is currently working on a telematic program to improve coexistence through the development of emotional intelligence in primary and secondary school students and on a project to discover the extent of bullying and cyberbullying among university students. She has been visiting professor at several Spanish and foreign universities (European and American). She has been director of the Department of Evolutionary Psychology and Education at the University of Murcia, as well as Head of the Educational Research and Innovation Section of the Institute of Educational Sciences. She has two sections of research recognized by the National Evaluation Agency. Her books include: The Bull-S test for the sociometric evaluation of bullying; Violence in the classroom: Analysis and intervention proposals; The CIP program: Awareness, Reporting and Prevention, for psycho-educational intervention and differentiated treatment of bullying; Violence in school relations: Keys to understanding, evaluating and intervening in bullying. She is the author of numerous articles published in leading journals and is registered with the JCR.

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Key dates

Deadline: 2017-12-30
Publication dates:
Preprint: 2018-05-15
Print: 2018-07-01

Collaboration

Journal Web:

www.comunicarjournal.com