
Juanjo Balaguer

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0776-5888>

jbalaguer@ugr.es

Universidad de Granada

Jordi Alberich-Pascual

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6871-4614>

jalberich@ugr.es

Universidad de Granada

Submitted

March 15th, 2022

Approved

May 1st, 2023

© 2023

Communication & Society

ISSN 0214-0039

E ISSN 2386-7876

doi: 10.15581/003.36.3.193-209

www.communication-society.com

2023 – Vol. 36(3)

pp. 193-209

How to cite this article:

Balaguer, J. & Alberich-Pascual, J.

(2023). Co-creation and learning: an assessment of the pedagogical proposals in collaborative interactive non-fiction,

Communication & Society, 36(3), 193-209.

Co-creation and learning: an assessment of the pedagogical proposals in collaborative interactive non-fiction

Abstract

Audiovisual co-creation has always had a pedagogical nature, which has been maintained in its adaptation to digital communication, although it is applied in different ways. This study analyses the pedagogical proposals in collaborative interactive non-fiction in the digital environment, and compares them with previous projects of participatory practices. As case studies we selected five interactive audiovisual projects that stand out for their educational intent and their preparation of teaching resources, and analyzed their pedagogical proposals. First, we looked at pedagogy in pre-digital or analogical collaborative creation, which was used to develop an original analytical table. We used this table to study the five collaborative projects through three identified categories. The results show that these categories continue in initiatives today, although the findings show a shift in the pedagogy about audiovisuals, particularly concerning the technical aspects, as well as a weakening of the connection between learning and participation in the collective production. Finally, we can highlight that combining educational practices with collaborative production on the Internet is important to increase citizen participation and give a social perspective to this audiovisual modality.

Keywords

Collaborative creation, interactive documentary, critical pedagogy, participatory video, non-fiction, audiovisual media.

1. Introduction

Collaborative creation is an alternative production mode that opens up the production process to groups who are usually not involved in the audiovisual sphere, so that they can participate in decision making as well as in constructing the meaning behind the creation. This gives rise to a greater variety of perspectives. This mode of production generally has a social approach, which is why it has a collective focus that challenges the notion of authorship and provides an alternative representation from the people who take part. Collaborative creation originated in different spheres with different traditions, so that there are terms that co-exist with differences related to context or discipline, such as collaborative cinema or participatory video (Villaplana-Ruiz, 2015), although they have a common foundation.

This collaborative focus promotes processes that combine communication with education for participants in order to generate a positive social change. In this sense, the connection has been highlighted between participatory audiovisual projects and learning (Vezne, 2020) through empowerment processes (White, 2003) or by using audiovisual tools for self-expression, activism and audiovisual literacy (Yang, 2016).

The tradition of collaborative film seems to have a markedly pedagogical intent, which can be seen in cases such as the *cinegiornali liberi* (1968-1970), a pioneering project in horizontal cinema by Cesare Zavattini, in which collaboration implied both an opportunity for the participating collective to make demands and to gain knowledge via the medium of film (Mirizio, 2017). However, there are other experiences that have appealed even more explicitly to the pedagogical process.

Some relevant examples are the Centro de Servicios de Pedagogía Audiovisual para la Capacitación (CESPAC) and the Centre de Services de Production Audiovisuelle (CESPA), as well as the participatory video organizations Real Time Video and InsightShare. The first of these cases, CESPAC (1970), was an initiative in Peru that provided educational guidance manuals that included a set of questions and practical activities. Inspired by that experience, CESPA (1989), developed in Mali, accompanied the video learning with pedagogical packages about different topics (Gumucio Dagron, 2001).

Real Time, on the other hand, is an organization that began in the 80s with the aim of using video as an instrument for empowering communities and fostering self-management. Its work includes giving courses to use video effectively with activities and games that use video, thus stimulating the group's learning and encouraging relationships among its members (Shaw & Robertson, 1997). InsightShare has also used participatory video since 1999 in order to empower the participants. The work of this organization is understood to be a shared educational process to learn how to use audiovisual materials, as well as to identify and tackle challenges that affect communities and find solutions. By applying audiovisual techniques, the participants can communicate problems and state their situations, using video as a meaningful tool to change their conditions (Lunch & Lunch, 2006).

Participatory collaboration has grown in recent years in the digital environment, where a multitude of groups take part in online proposals with shared authorship (Alberich-Pascual & Gómez-Pérez, 2016). Therefore, this type of audiovisual works now uses new formulations that have been added to previous ones. New related terms are used, such as "crowdsourcing," and collaboration has started to be included in other formats, such as the interactive documentary or i-docs (Miller & Allor, 2016; Nash, 2014). These collaborative formulas, like interactive non-fiction itself, are linked and often associated with pre-digital cases of collaborative cinema (Gaudenzi *et al.*, 2021; Nash, 2021; Rose, 2017).

The way participation occurs in the digital environment has been the subject of many critical reviews (Carpentier, 2011; Fuchs, 2014; Jenkins & Carpentier, 2013), which look at how citizen involvement is fostered in these eminently participatory procedures originating on the Internet. In addition to the pedagogical worth of collaborative creation, the literature has also highlighted the opportunity provided by interactive non-fiction as a model for learning (Gifreu-Castells & Moreno, 2014) as well as the suitability of participatory video for education, also in digital media (Martínez Luna & Carrión Candel, 2019).

It is well-known that access to and use of recording devices and content production have increased in participatory culture. This has given rise to informal learning that includes technical aspects of audiovisual production, such as the kind that leads to the generation of content on platforms like YouTube (Pires *et al.*, 2019), as well as new learning strategies and new literacies (Scolari, 2016, 2019). In addition, there is a more multi-dimensional perspective of literacy. This is positive because this notion needs to be based on a broader conceptualization that includes de-codifying and understanding messages in the media in their different formulas and formats (Pérez & Delgado, 2012). All this makes it necessary to

evaluate the didactic nature of audiovisual co-creation, which has been challenged in the digital society. For this reason, some authors have proposed or analyzed its adaptation. For Varghese *et al.* (2019), technical tasks should not occupy the center of these processes, given that technological and audiovisual literacy has increased. According to these authors, the focus should be shifted to other issues, such as learning about storytelling. On the other hand, Montero Sánchez (2020) has analyzed the renewal of some organizations dedicated to audiovisual co-creation. The author warns that the new possibilities in producing, editing and circulating content, have meant, in some cases, that more attention has been given to the processes by which videos are shared than their production.

For all these reasons, it is important to analyze the learning proposals in collaborative and interactive productions in the digital environment. This article assesses the didactic element that has historically characterized collaborative creation, taking into account that it has not often been a subject for research, despite being one of its fundamental characteristics.

2. The learning process in collaborative audiovisual creation

Although collaborative creation has had a constant pedagogical focus throughout its history, participatory video is the formula that uses this approach most explicitly. Yang (2016) links this creative process to focuses on literacy, such as social theory literacy and critical media literacy. The former is notable for collective learning, self-awareness and cultural criticism, while other components stand out in the latter, such as analysis of the politics of representation and production of alternative media content. Yang argues that, thanks to these characteristics, participatory video serves to challenge standard aspects of conventional communication and for the participants to explore their identities through other optics.

Moreover, Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy (1970) is a fundamental point of reference often quoted in the bibliography about participatory video, because it is explicitly open to learning processes, fostering critical thought and the use of a horizontal, inclusive methodology. This approach proposes a dialogic education based on mutual learning and does so horizontally for all the parties involved in the process. This dialogue serves to define what topics are important for the participants, because it aims to prevent the didactic program being carried out based on topics that are unrelated to the participants' concerns and aspirations. On the other hand, the foundation of the program is the participants' experience itself, their context and the specific conditioning factors that define their daily lives. In this sense, this method is based on the perspectives of the individuals taking part, not only on the educators' focus. Therefore, the learning stems from an exchange between the views held by the two parties in the educational process.

Critical pedagogy begins with the educators learning about the community, which provides information that is used to define the didactic program. Then the topics to be addressed in the education process are determined in collaboration with the participants, then the materials are produced, which could be drawings, photos or recordings. Using these materials during the sessions encourages critical analysis and debate among the participants. Apart from creating content, it is also possible to choose journalistic or literary texts for a critical reading, especially applied to media discourses. Since all the materials talk about a topic which has been seen to be of interest for the participants, it is understood that they will become more involved in the education proposal. Similarly, as the topics are related to their own experiences, the educational dynamics will help them to reflect on their reality, which will motivate them to become more involved in their communities. With the attitude that reflection and action should not be separated, critical pedagogy maintains that the process of raising awareness must lead then to collective action for social transformation.

Collaborative creation involves a similar process. It is also based on the participants' active involvement, who collaborate horizontally with the filmmakers or those facilitating the initiative. The participants are taught to use the audiovisual tools as well as other important

resources to convey their messages. Maintaining the dialogic educational process, the community then generates its own audiovisual content, which describes their own realities as individuals or as part of a collective. This leads to specific challenges being identified, which could finally be translated into action to deal with these problems. This characterization can be seen in classic collaborative cinema initiatives such as the Fogo Island project (1967), directed by Colin Low and promoted by the program of the National Film Board of Canada called Challenge for Change (Waugh *et al.*, 2010); in militant cinema proposals like some of the works by the Colectivo Cine de Clase [Class Film Collective] (Mirizio, 2017); and in the general practice of participatory video.

We find a connection between critical pedagogy and the didactic aspect of audiovisual co-creation, as both proposals having a marked participatory character. This comparison can be seen in Table 1, which shows the division of the two processes into three stages that correspond to moments in learning.

Table 1. Comparative of learning processes.

Freirean critical pedagogy	Pedagogy in audiovisual co-creation
Production of materials (drawings, photos, recordings, etc.) in relation to experiences or interests of the participating group	Audiovisual production in relation to issues that impact the participating group
Use of the materials for critical analysis of the chosen topics (which are related to the situation and interests of the participants)	Critical reflection and debate on the content created and the challenges it reflects (which appeal to the participants' experiences)
Awareness and collective action in search of social change	Learning to organize screenings and social events, expanding the content in the community and carrying out activist actions

Source: Own elaboration.

This comparison is based on a review of critical pedagogy following Freire (1970) and a study of various cases of collaborative audiovisual creation. However, in addition to including those authors or specific cases that place Freire's contribution as a fundamental reference in the didactic conception of their initiatives (Zemits, 2014; Rogers, 2017) or of participatory video as a whole (Roberts & Muñiz, 2020), we also include various bibliographical references that look at the development of their collaborative creation practices. Thus, Baumann *et al.* (2020) discusses a project that began with training in cinematography, then preceded to filming, and later, to collective analysis. Finally, the author explains how the organization of the public screening took place with the objective of sharing the creation with the community and generating social awareness. The initiative of Benjamin-Thomas *et al.* (2019) involves initial training in using the camera and aspects of recording, followed by collectively deciding the themes of the videos and producing them. These authors discuss the challenges that were faced, as well as a final stage of action, in which they explain the search for and proposal of solutions. In the case of Manuel and Vigar (2021), some initial instructions on audiovisual planning and on the use of an app employed in the initiative led to a deliberation process in which the participants shared their personal perceptions in relation to the subject matter. This gave rise to community stories based on the participants' own experiences that helped define the initiative. With this, the participants "contribute to the re-imagination of the future of the spaces and places in discussion" (p. 1568). Kennelly's participatory filmmaking project (2018) includes several stages that culminate in a film project, although other creative productions take place previously, such as photo journals and interviews. In the experience of Cooke *et al.* (2018), activism is placed at the center, so that the exhibition is understood as a tool for this purpose and the participants have to reflect on the type of events they would organize to promote this social action.

Therefore, the pedagogical side of collaborative creation can be divided into three categories. The first involves education in audiovisual skills, which structures the entire process and which is the basis for the subsequent creative focus. The second category is a series of activities that foster the participants' analysis, creativity and expression, particularly regarding their own experiences. This leads to an exercise of communication through self-awareness, empowerment and critical reflection, as also proposed in the education process described by Freire. The third category involves acting for social change based on a previous process of self-awareness and empowerment, identifying conflicts and searching for possible solutions or activities aimed at resolving problems. These actions may require specific training in certain competencies, such as communication skills, which will help the community to achieve its goals (Lunch & Lunch, 2006). We used these three categories to develop an original analysis table (Table 2), which we use in this study to analyze the didactic side of collaborative audiovisual creation.

This model presents the essential elements of learning proposals in audiovisual co-creation, as considered in the review of research and practical cases. However, it must be emphasized that this research studies the collaborative creation that has this didactic foundation. Although this is frequent and has been present since its origins, this form of cultural production encompasses broad and diverse processes, which sometimes prioritize other issues, and which have multiplied since the beginning of digital society. In addition, a pedagogical design has to be flexible and take into account the adaptation to its different contexts, as Freire (1982, cited in Walker & Arrighi, 2013) points out. This breadth cannot be neglected, so the model reflects it in the breadth of its categories and in the list of indicators in Table 2.

Table 2. Elements of learning in collaborative audiovisual creation.

Categories of learning	Participatory processes	Indicators
Audiovisual pedagogy	Production of audiovisual content; specific training in audiovisuals; analysis of media communication	Use of cameras; training and practice in scriptwriting and editing footage; video production; etc.
Critical analysis and personal expression	Production of creative content; participation in debates; dynamics of self-representation	Training in other means of expression; creation of other types of materials, such as drawings or radio content; reflection on the participants' experience; discussions about the material produced and about the learning process, etc.
Learning tasks to foster social change beyond the classroom	Identification of challenges or strategies to tackle them; tasks in the community	Reflection and specific discussion on challenges faced by the participants or their communities; organization and participation in public screenings; involvement of other members of the community in the initiative; etc.

Source: Own elaboration.

3. Materials and methods

The research has two objectives:

- O1. To characterize the didactic proposals of collaborative audiovisual creation.
- O2. To evaluate the evolution of these proposals within the context of the digital society and in the specific field of participatory interactive production.

We first reviewed the literature, then used an analytical method to identify the learning elements characteristic of collaborative audiovisual creation based on our study of analog or pre-digital cases and recent research of audiovisual co-creation that is not interactive, such

as those mentioned above, as well as some seminal texts on participatory video (Roberts & Lunch, 2015), provided by authors involved in these practices (Braden & Huong, 1998; Lunch & Lunch, 2006; Shaw & Robertson, 1997).

Then we selected a series of interactive, participatory and didactic initiatives from the last decade and assessed them using the above table. The cases were chosen according to a criterion of relevance, based on the repercussions, participation and trajectory of the proposals, as well as considering their clear pedagogical approach. The search started in a benchmark repository in the field of interactive production, the Docubase of the MIT Open Documentary Lab, filtering for works that were labeled “educational” and which used collaborative design. There were initiatives among the results that went deeper into the learning processes, giving a clear proposal for teaching via resources and educational guides expressly created by professionals from the sphere of education. We chose three that still had all their information available: *Immigrant Nation* (Theo Rigby, 2010–today), *Question Bridge: Black Males* (Chris Johnson, Bayette Ross Smith, Hank Willis Thomas & Kamal Sinclair, 2012–2016) and *Primal* (Caroline Hayeur, 2014). These productions were also selected by festivals such as the New York Film Festival (*Immigrant Nation*), Sheffield DocFest and the Sundance New Frontier (*Question Bridge: Black Males*), and IDFA DocLab (*Primal*).

To round off the study, two more cases with a similar pedagogical implementation were chosen due to their significance: *The Shore Line* (Elizabeth Miller, 2015–2017) and *Global Lives Project* (various authors, 2004 to today, and its didactic guide was published in 2014). Both projects are collaborative and have a markedly educational character. Their relevance was also compared by evaluating other elements, such as their trajectory and repercussions. *The Shore Line* was selected in more than a dozen international events and festivals, most notably the fifth i-Docs 2018, an important meeting in the field of interactive documentaries organized by the Digital Cultures Research Centre (University of West England). Moreover, its pedagogical focus is quite remarkable, since the work originated with the intention of making the most of the interactivity of new audiovisual formats for teaching and it has been positively evaluated by teaching staff at different educational levels (Miller, 2018). The *Global Lives Project* is an initiative that has been active for over a decade. Various researchers see it as a good reference for applying collaborative dynamics on the Internet (Dovey, 2014; Gaudenzi, 2014). Moreover, it has a notable pedagogical side, as shown by the fact that more than 500 teachers have asked to use its educational material, according to its website.

With this selection (Table 3), the content was analyzed focusing on each of the initiatives’ teaching guides. We have used a mixed approach (Yin, 2018) that combines the qualitative study of the guidelines with a quantitative analysis that describes the predominant processes in each category based on the presence of the indicators of the analysis tool (Table 2). For this, the didactic units in each guide were taken as a point of reference, meaning each of the sections with instructions to carry out the teaching, the learning goals, a set of questions and a series of activities. Thus, the guides from *Immigrant Nation* (11), *Global Lives Project* (9), *Question Bridge: Black Males* (6), *Primal* (4) and *The Shore Line* (10) were divided into these different parts, resulting in 40 units. This process was necessary to be able to evaluate the categories in each project and thus make a comparison, considering the differences in the lengths of the initiatives. Items were detected that were identified with each of the categories in the aforementioned table, evaluating their presence in each of the projects as a whole. Then, the presence of each item was calculated according to the percentage it made up of each guide in order to compare the five cases under study taking into account their differences in lengths. A graph was also made with the absolute values of each of the items per project (Figures 1–3) to illustrate how much they apply each item independently from the length of the initiative itself.

The following items were considered in each category:

- a) Audiovisual pedagogy. Didactic units that imply a creation of audiovisual content were evaluated, as well as those that give specific education in that subject, and those that provide a critical view of media communication.
- b) Critical analysis and personal expression. Units were included in which personal expression or dialogue is proposed, as well as activities in which there is creative content that leads to self-representation practices. These are an essential element in collaborative creation that also influence self-awareness and critical reflection.
- c) Learning tasks to foster social change beyond the classroom. Units were considered that explicitly refer to problems or seek solutions, as well as units with tasks that go beyond the classroom, giving greater visibility to the participant or their environment, while attempting to generate a direct impact on the community.

Next, the qualitative analysis assessed the application of each of the categories in Table 2. We carried out a comparative study between these cases and the collaborative practices outside the interactive field that were a reference for the creation of the analysis tool. The intensity or prominence acquired by the different categories, through the presence or absence of the indicators related to each of the participatory processes, allow us to infer changes in the formulation of these didactic initiatives within the framework of digital society. In addition, the comparison between the five case studies facilitates conclusions on the coexistence of different aspects of this format in its convergence with interactive production.

Table 3. Cases studied.

Title	<i>Immigrant Nation</i>	<i>Global Lives Project</i>	<i>Question Bridge</i>	<i>Primal</i>	<i>The Shore Line Project</i>
Period	2010-today. 2014 didactic guide	2004-today	2012-2016	2014	2015-2017
Educational resource	<i>Educators Guide</i>	<i>Unheard Stories: Building Empathy through the Global Lives Project</i>	<i>Question Bridge Curricular Tools</i>	<i>Study Guide</i>	<i>Workshop Cards and Activities for elementary students</i>
Aimed at students of	14-18 year-old	11-18 year-old	14-18 year-old	14-16 year-old	Elementary school, secondary school and university
Duration	15-80 minutes per lesson	50-100 minutes per lesson	45 minutes per lesson	Not indicated	Not indicated
Participation in the interactive platform	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Website	https://inationmedia.com/interactive/	https://globallives.org/	http://questionbridge.com/	http://primal.nfb.ca/en	https://theshorelineproject.org/

Source: Own elaboration.

4. Analysis and results

4.1. Analysis

4.1.1. Immigrant Nation

Immigrant Nation is a multi-platform project by the producer iNation Media. It includes feature-length films, Internet series and a collaborative i-doc, with the aim of telling the story of migrations to the United States based on the personal narratives of those involved. The resources it offers include a guide for teaching staff with a well-known participatory approach.

This resource is aimed at students in the final years of compulsory secondary and sixth-form education (14–18 years of age). It is intended to develop writing, speaking and listening skills, with a perspective rooted in critical thought and acquiring values by sharing personal stories. It is geared towards immigrant students to help their adaptation process, as well as towards local people to foster empathy. The aim is to initiate a personal reflection on each student's family history, to learn from the past and help participants define their own identities and to reflect on other cultures. Each session also has some time dedicated to debate.

The guide begins with two activities that introduce the issue of immigration via a series of questions intended to generate debate and foster mutual knowledge among the students, who also share their own stories about immigration. The project proposes looking for common ground between the different experiences. The subsequent exercises include activities for creation and reflection, such as drawing a significant moment of their lives on a card.

After the introductory activities, there are four modules divided into various lessons, which use some of the audiovisual material generated by the initiative. There are also creative activities proposed here, such as creating an advertisement to raise awareness about social matters. Before participants start the task, they are taught audiovisual notions like types of camera shots. This prepares them for the purpose of the modules, when the educational program connects with *Immigrant Nation's* interactive platform. The platform acts as a tool for teaching the history of immigration, which the students need to explore. To finish off, each student can develop their own story to share on the platform.

4.1.2. Global Lives Project

The *Global Lives Project* has a visual library with material from all around the world. It was launched in 2004 in order to foster empathy by giving visibility to different cultures. To do so, filmmakers were coordinated to voluntarily document their surroundings, promoting debate about diversity. In addition to generating this material, which was later published in the website's interactive area, the *Global Lives Project* team organized events in different public spaces and created an educational program focused on issues like interculturality and globalization through the perspective of new media. It is aimed at students from secondary education to the end of high school (aged 18).

The teaching guide, created in 2014, addresses issues such as identity and its multi-dimensional nature and connection with personal values and experiences. The activities include creating an identity map and a life map, in which the students include key experiences in their personal development. This is intended to lead to a dialogue among peers. Therefore, the lessons are backed up by debates and videos of the project related to the class content.

These final lessons teach notions of documentary narrative and audiovisual representation so that each participant can record a video on a person close to them, whether they are in their class or family. The activity can also include another documentary about the same person, but completely altering the perspective in which it is produced. This means that the different forms of representation that may take shape can be clearly seen to depend on the approach, which influences critical thinking about representations in the media. Along the same lines, an interview is carried out to decide how the interviewee is presented, using any format to do so, whether in a poem, an article or a work of art. This creative content is not included in the interactive platform, but the guide encourages participation in the *Global Lives Project*, although this is only aimed at advanced students and is not part of the education program.

4.1.3. Question Bridge: Black Males

Question Bridge is a transmedia initiative that began as an art installation in 2012 and was later extended to an interactive platform, a phone app, events in different communities and an educational program for high school students. It seeks to break down stereotypes about men of African descent based on a space for participation that enables experiences to be shared.

Each participant responds in a video to a question asked by a previous user, thereby generating debate about the notions of diversity and identity. The interactive platform was created in 2014.

The educational program deals with identity, conflict resolution and inclusion within a specific group and among different groups. Although it focuses on a demographic group, it is intended to act as a model for any collective. It is made up of six modules that develop critical thinking, collaboration and creativity. They are always introduced by videos from the project and are geared toward learning, questions and instructions to encourage debate, tasks to be done at home and a list of references, as well as additional questions and activities. There is also a section with other ideas and references to inspire conversation.

The tasks that the students have to carry out include interviewing people in their community, creating visual maps of their identities or analyzing representations in the media. The approach is pedagogical for social transformation, as we can see in one activity that involves drawing up a list of the community's socio-economic problems in order to subsequently identify the necessary changes and the people who could get involved. It also attempts to reflect critically on matters of sex, gender and sexual orientation, as well as generating strategies to prevent violent behavior.

Although the educational guide builds on an interactive project, class participation does not lead to specific education in audiovisual matters or to collaboration in the platform, which would extend the dialogue over the Internet.

4.1.4. Primal

Stemming from a brief presentation by six young participants about their lives, each one of whom appears in the main videos of *Primal*, collaborative dynamics are generated with a scream as the *leitmotiv*. The interactive platform invites a collective scream as a way of expressing emotions, encouraging anybody to add their own video. Furthermore, it offers a study guide for personal development and acquiring skills. This is aimed at students aged 14-16.

As happens with the interactive platform, the guide is based on the scream as a form of expression, also linked to the visual arts. It has activities to foster debate. Experiences are shared that have involved screaming, for example, as well as other matters related to the participants' own experience, such as situations that may have led to a scream, the act of repressing it, the feeling that arose in those circumstances and a creative way to express something which otherwise might be expressed by screaming.

The latter activity leads to discovery of works of art that are connected to the action that this project is based on. This produces a debate about art, encouraging consideration of its worthiness as a market product or as an act of resistance, after which the students must look for similar artworks and propose them in class, together with questions that foster dialogue among classmates.

The guide has two final sections. The first one encourages participation in the interactive work, helping to approach the creative process involved in creating a video and to use the *Primal* interface. This leads to a final debate to reflect on the collective work. The second section is an extra activity that involves writing a slam poem.

4.1.5. The Shore Line

The Shore Line is an interactive documentary that uses contributions from participants in different regions of the world to warn about the threats of the climate crisis. Professionals from the spheres of cinema, teaching, art, architecture, science and urban planning, as well as students and activists, have all been involved in developing this documentary.

Unlike other cases where the intention to teach joins an initiative that had already been running for some time or was more independent, *The Shore Line* stretches through the entire project from its initial design. The aim is for students to discover new ways of getting involved

in their communities so they can perceive the interconnection between their surroundings and the environment, appealing to their responsibility to help improve the situation. This educational program is aimed at secondary school and university students, though it also provides a guide for elementary schools.

The numerous resources it provides include “workshop cards,” which are documents with lessons arranged by topics, such as “changemakers,” “activism” and “water,” and also videos of the initiative, different kinds of activities, questions to foster dialogue and a list of related resources. The tasks have a creative perspective and a participatory approach, such as finding a poem that talks about water to start a debate about how art raises social awareness, or reflecting on one’s own identity and how it is influenced by the landscape.

The Shore Line focuses on conflict resolution, which is perceived in activities such as making a list of problems in the community, studying the differences in perspectives in the media when they deal with environmental disputes, and identifying strategies to benefit the community. Tasks that go beyond the classroom take on particular importance since they can have an impact on the community, with tasks such as informing the community about environmental matters, recording an interview with a local activist, or sharing the work done with other schools, groups and organizations.

4.2. Results

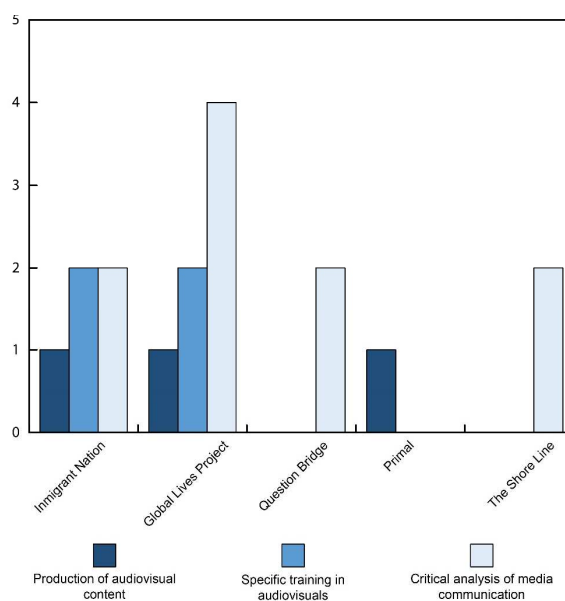
4.2.1. Audiovisual pedagogy

The didactic guides studied in this research state that audiovisual education is not their main role. There are three cases that propose production of audiovisual material, though only in one of their units: *Immigrant Nation* (9%), *Global Lives Project* (11%) and *Primal* (25%). The last two projects do so at the end, acting as a conclusive task that serves to put the previous learning into practice. It is thus consistent that almost none of the proposals include specific technical training in audiovisual skills, except for *Immigrant Nation* (18%) and *Global Lives Project* (22%), with two units each. Moreover, in these units, priority is given to knowledge about narratives and modes of audiovisual representation, as opposed to more technical aspects. In addition, there is one issue shared by all the initiatives except for *Primal*; that is, the critical approach taught regarding interpreting the media and their representations, which corroborates the importance of media literacy that has been noted in previous cases of collaborative audiovisual works (*Immigrant Nation*, 18%; *Global Lives Project*, 44%; *Question Bridge*, 33%; *The Shore Line*, 20%). It should be noted that all the cases studied use material generated by the initiative as a tool for learning, giving importance to the audiovisual work created collaboratively and to the multitude of perspectives that can be contributed in order to obtain complex knowledge.

Although audiovisual pedagogy does not have a significant space in these initiatives, this medium continues to occupy the center of the proposals as a whole. In the comparison between the five cases, it is worth mentioning the audiovisual creation that is proposed in the *Global Lives Project* and *Primal*. In the first, we find a process more akin to traditional collaborative creation, where production is preceded by some training in audiovisual aspects. In the second, on the other hand, we perceive a shift from technical audiovisual learning to more creative and reflective issues. Thus, emphasis is placed on the subsequent presentation of the video to the other participants, with a series of questions that aim to delve into the personal and creative process (“what emotion did you want to express through this scream” or “were you inspired by a work of art in particular,” for example). Along with the lack of this category in the other case studies, this characteristic of *Primal* is based on the context of digital culture, with the increase in access and use of audiovisual tools. This encourages more space to be granted to other issues and the pedagogy on this matter shifts, even though it is the emblematic element of this mode of co-creation.

On the other hand, collaborative creation has tended, throughout its history, to promote this involvement of participants in the audiovisual field as a way to increase the range of media representations and introduce traditionally overlooked social groups. This was done by incorporating the participants' content in the collective work. In the case studies, this dissemination element does not occur, since only *Primal* and *Immigrant Nation* explicitly encourage participants to incorporate material in the platform. In these cases, at least, this search for a plural representation and the addition of a multitude of voices is maintained. Both this issue and the previous one point to a relevant aspect for our analysis: the loss of centrality of the question of access to the media as the key element of alternative communication.

Figure 1. Number of didactic units in the category of audiovisual pedagogy.



Source: Own elaboration.

4.2.2. Critical analysis and personal expression

This category is more important than the previous one, since all the proposals attempt to foster the participants' creative development through different formats, most notably narration (all) and visual creation (all except *Primal*). Indeed, creation occupied a significant place in each of the guides, taking up a high percentage of each project's total units: *Immigrant Nation* (45%), *Global Lives Project* (89%), *Question Bridge* (67%), *Primal* (50%) and *The Shore Line* (60%).

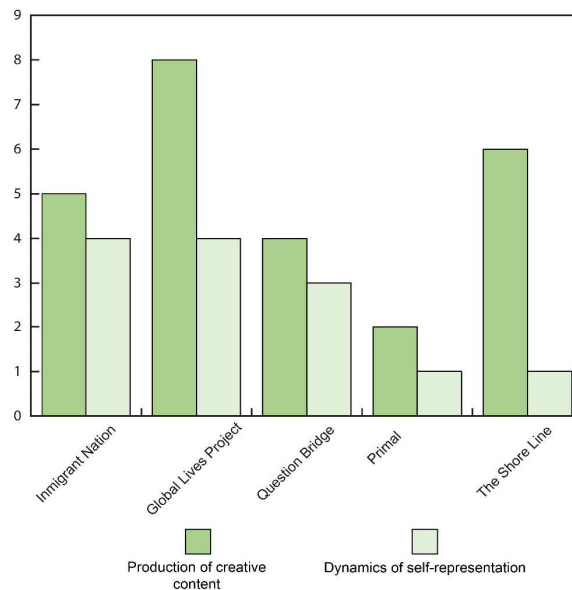
Furthermore, in most cases these initiatives are intended to express a topic regarding the participants themselves, emphasizing identity (*Immigrant Nation*, *Global Lives Project*, *Question Bridge*), and personal experiences (*Immigrant Nation*, *Global Lives Project*). The creative activities usually promote personal representation, as can be seen in the high percentage of units with these types of activities in each of the didactic guides: *Immigrant Nation* (36%), *Global Lives Project* (44%), *Question Bridge* (50%), *Primal* (25%), but less so in *The Shore Line* (10%), which focuses more on activism. In addition, all cases give references to other artworks or readings that can cultivate creativity. Similarly to collective expression, all of the initiatives also include times for dialogue and a series of questions to foster debate among the participants, in the same quantity (all the units), which is why this participatory process is not included in Figure 2.

The analysis of this category finds a correspondence with the previous one. Audiovisual creation has taken a backseat in a communicative panorama in which multimedia and transmedia are protagonists. The interactive proposals favor the creative development of their participants through a multitude of means of expression. If the previous category was

linked to the question of access, this one finds a connection with discursive construction. Although in digital society the use of media has been facilitated, the same does not necessarily occur with the promotion of critical analysis. Thus, we find a strengthening of this analysis and of personal expression for the elaboration of these contents, as well as training in issues such as narrative, present in *Immigrant Nation*, through the presentation of the components that a story must have. In addition, there are always other relevant complements in the didactic units, such as questions that encourage critical analysis or debate on certain artistic works that serve as inspiration.

On the other hand, all cases foster plurality by influencing self-representation and identity through creative activities and tasks that often focus on the participants' own experiences. An example of this are the identity maps that were proposed as an activity in both *Question Bridge* and *Global Lives Project*. Returning to critical pedagogy, where the topics to be discussed were chosen based on the students' interests, we see that the same occurs here, as the focus is placed on the participants' own experiences or on the situation of the communities in which they live. Similarly, self-representation is one of the bases of audiovisual co-creation because it generates greater involvement of the participants, who are then motivated to reflect on their situation and try to improve it. This connects to the third category of our analysis tool.

Figure 2. Number of didactic units in the category of critical analysis and personal expression.



Source: Own elaboration.

4.2.3. Learning tasks to foster social change beyond the classroom

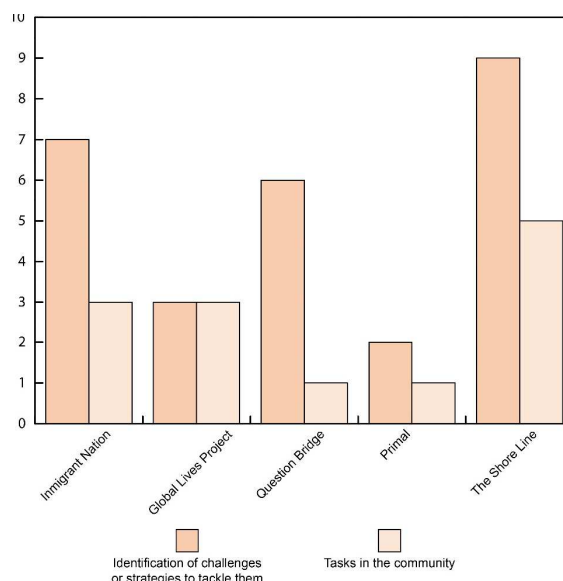
Although all the cases mention issues of diversity and nearly all focus on the positive impact on a community or collective, *The Shore Line* stands out in this category because it is the proposal that pays most attention to social change. It has numerous activities to identify problems and act outside the classroom. Indeed, 90% of its units contain a clear identification of conflicts or strategies to solve them, while 50% have activities intended to have some impact on the community or to enable contact to be established with people involved in markedly social matters, such as activists. In this category, *Question Bridge* is also significant, as it always includes an identification of conflicts in its modules, though it does not stand out in the second subcategory (17%). Although it includes some relevant points in this regard, such as a module that helps confront violent attitudes, it does not usually add tasks that involve direct activism.

On the other hand, *Immigrant Nation* and *Global Lives Project* have activities that identify conflicts (64% and 33% respectively) and propose others that include this more activist approach (27% and 33% respectively). *Immigrant Nation*, for example, encourages participants to get involved in social organizations, which it gives information about, or to send a letter to a local media outlet complaining about a problematic stereotype, thus going beyond the classroom with a critical view of media discourses. However, in general, all the cases stand out more for activities that identify conflicts, although they are not usually geared toward generating such a direct impact on the community.

In addition, the projects are structured based on values of equality and inclusion, sometimes with a direct reference to a specific social group, attempting to strengthen ties among its members (*Immigrant Nation* and *Question Bridge*). *Primal*, whose identification of a collective is less pertinent, also touches directly on the value of diversity.

The previous categories were linked to access and discursive construction, while here the key component is community articulation, a fundamental characteristic of collaborative co-creation. If these three components (access, discursive construction and community articulation) correspond to the three established categories, only the last two maintain a significant role in these interactive productions. In this way, the two participatory processes of this category remain in the analyzed interactive productions. On the other hand, the aforementioned lack of a connection between the participants' contributions and the audiovisual work makes it difficult for some of the indicators in Table 2 to occur for this category, such as the organization and participation in public screenings to which people outside the initiative would attend. However, the other indicators are reflected in these case studies, such as the one corresponding to the involvement of other members of the community in the initiative, which is the most linked to activism, and also an important characteristic of the traditional modes of collaborative creation. This occurs, for example, in *Shore Line*, where the student is asked to invite a local activist to one of the sessions to talk with them about the activities they carry out in their organization.

Figure 3. Number of didactic units in the category of learning tasks to foster social change beyond the classroom.



Source: Own elaboration.

5. Discussion and conclusions

Out of the three categories in our analysis, we conclude that the first one, audiovisual pedagogy, is weaker now compared to the earlier, pre-digital cases of collaborative creation that have acted as a point of reference. Despite this, some essential aspects of media literacy, like critical analysis of the media and audiovisual works, are recurrently present, especially in *Immigrant Nation* and *Global Lives Project*.

The second category is more present and alive. In all cases, the didactic proposals foster personal expressiveness and creativity. The *Global Lives Project* is particularly noteworthy. In terms of the third category, there is an emphasis on the social perspective of these interactive productions, since their proposals are based on critical thought, building collective bonds and appreciating diversity. Together with identifying problems, this encourages benefitting from learning in order to improve the community, though there are few cases that propose tangible action. *The Shore Line* serves as the point of reference in this category.

Although this research proposed studying the pedagogical nature of collaborative digital productions, it was also intended to be useful for indicating approaches and characteristics that may serve as a point of reference to carry out or analyze similar proposals, especially when the intention is to boost or focus on one of the categories proposed.

In modernizing collaborative audiovisual creation via interactive digital production, education about technical audiovisual knowledge is sidelined by another kind of learning. This is not so strange if we take into account the evolution in uses of audiovisual media, above all since the beginning of the digital age. With this, the research finds correspondence between these cases of co-creation in the interactive field and the proposal to redefine these participatory initiatives, downplaying the more technical issues in audiovisual learning processes and granting a more central role to other materials, according to Varghese *et al.* (2020).

It is production skills that predominate today, compared to others such as those related to acquiring values, which take on a more marginal role, as shown by Scolari (2019) in his study on transmedia literacy in adolescents. In contrast, the pedagogical proposal of collaborative creation through interactive productions proposes a balance in which technical knowledge, which is necessary to deal with production, takes on a secondary role, while emphasis is placed on activities that involve acquiring values, personal expression, critical interpretation of the media and identification of conflicts. Moreover, there is a new kind of educational proposal in creative collaboration that reduces the role of audiovisual creation to include other creative media, also in keeping with the culture of convergence. This corresponds to the study by Montero Sánchez (2020), who indicated that the expansion in the use of audiovisual media, even though it is socially positive, should not be equated with or downplay other collective processes promoted by participatory video.

It is also worth noting that the interaction between most of these initiatives is divided into two spheres: the pedagogical one and the audiovisual one. Although the educational proposal has its roots in the interactive platform, participation in didactic programs does not usually find a way back to that platform. Hence, the learning process is not usually used to produce material to be shown afterwards on the interactive platform. Only *Immigrant Nation* and *Primal* lead to the students' participation on the platform, whereas the audiovisual activity in the *Global Lives Project* is not intended to be added to the online content. Therefore, there is some disconnection between the collaborative work and the participatory pedagogy. This undermines one of the classic purposes of collaborative formulas, which is to foster creation by individuals while at the same time giving them the visibility that they could not otherwise attain, in order to challenge stereotypes in the media or simply to create a more plural discourse.

This characteristic shows another significant difference with pre-digital practices in which participation in producing the work fully coincided with the learning process, and in

which the community that contributed with its own audiovisual material was the same one that was educated with the project. Critical pedagogy, which requires a close exchange and collective action, is thus separated from the digital environment and from the participation that takes place there. Meanwhile, interactive platforms are nourished by the contributions sent individually, although they usually refer to collectives or communities.

This does not stop those who only participate online from also benefiting from the pedagogical nature of the proposals, whose educational values are also present in the digital environment; however, it is interesting to evaluate alternatives that combine the educational activities in a physical space and on the internet in a more satisfactory way, and more so in an age in which online education is becoming increasingly relevant. The pedagogical side is particularly suitable for encouraging the participatory side, so this kind of initiative should be carried out with greater determination in the digital sphere. Furthermore, this would be useful to increase the social perspective of these initiatives in that it would foster greater projection for the participation, representation and visibility for the collectives taking part.

This article has been published as a part of the research project “Transmedialization and Hybridization of Fiction and Non-Fiction in Contemporary Media Culture (FICTRANS),” Ref. PID2021-124434NB-I00, funded by MCIN/AEI/10.13039/501100011033/FEDER A Way to Make Europe, State Plan of Scientific and Technical Research and Innovation 2021-2023.

References

- Alberich-Pascual, J. & Gómez-Pérez, F. (2016). Transmedia explorations in contemporary Ibero-American collaborative film-making. *Artnodes*, 18, 28-36.
<https://www.doi.org/10.7238/a.voi18.3054>
- Baumann, S. E., Lhaki, P. & Burke, J. G. (2020). Collaborative Filmmaking: A Participatory, Visual Research Method. *Qualitative Health Research*, 1-17.
<https://www.doi.org/10.1177/1049732320941826>
- Benjamin-Thomas, T. E., Laliberte Rudman, D., Gunaseelan, J., Abraham, V. J., Cameron, D., McGrath, C. & Vinoth Kumar, S. P. (2019). A participatory filmmaking process with children with disabilities in rural India: Working towards inclusive research. *Methodological Innovations*, 1-14. <https://www.doi.org/10.1177/2059799119890795>
- Braden, S. & Huong, T. (1998). *Video for development. A Casebook from Vietnam*. Oxford: Oxfam Press.
- Carpentier, N. (2011). *Media and Participation. A site of ideological-democratic struggle*. Bristol: Intellect.
- Cooke, P., Dennison, S. & Gould, W. (2018). The Voicing Hidden Histories project: participatory video in development, soft power and film language. *Media Practice and Education*, 19(3), 270-282. <https://www.doi.org/10.1080/25741136.2018.1511360>
- Dovey, J. (2014). Documentary Ecologies: Collaboration and Exploitation. In K. Nash, C. Hight & C. Summerhayes (Eds.), *New Documentary Ecologies. Emerging Platforms, Practices and Discourses* (pp. 11-33). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Bloomsbury.
- Fuchs, C. (2014). *Social Media: A Critical Introduction*. London: SAGE.
- Gaudenzi, S. (2014). Strategies of Participation: The Who, What and When of Collaborative Documentaries. In K. Nash, C. Hight & C. Summerhayes (Eds.), *New Documentary Ecologies. Emerging Platforms, Practices and Discourses* (pp. 129-148). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gaudenzi, S., Kermanchi, J. & Wiehl, A. (2021). Co-creation as im/mediate/d caring and sharing in times of crises: Reflections on collaborative interactive documentary as an agile response to community needs. *NECSUS*. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3q77DaQ>

- Gifreu-Castells, A. & Moreno, V. (2014). Educational Multimedia Applied to the Interactive Nonfiction Area. Using Interactive Documentary as a Model for Learning. In *6th International Conference on Education and New Learning Technologies* (ed IATED), Barcelona, 7-9 July, pp. 1306-1315.
- Gumucio Dagron, A. (2001). *Making Waves: Stories of Participatory Communication for Social Change*. New York: The Rockefeller Foundation.
- Jenkins, H. & Carpentier, N. (2013). Theorizing participatory intensities: A conversation about participation and politics. *Convergence*, 19(3), 265-286.
<https://www.doi.org/10.1177/1354856513482090>
- Kennely, J. (2018). Envisioning Democracy: Participatory Filmmaking with Homeless Youth. *Canadian Review of Sociology*, 55(2), 190-210.
- Lunch, N. & Lunch, C. (2006). *Insights into Participatory Video. A Handbook for the Field*. Oxford: InsightShare.
- Manuel, J. & Vigar, G. (2021). Enhancing citizen engagement in planning through participatory film-making. *EPB: Urban Analytics and City Science*, 48(6), 1558-1573.
<https://www.doi.org/10.1177/2399808320936280>
- Martínez Luna, S. & Carrión Candel, E. (2019). Participatory video and visual literacy: Challenges and opportunities for social and educational change. *Obra Digital*, 17, 77-91.
<https://www.doi.org/10.25029/od.2019.242.17>
- Miller, E. & Allor, M. (2016). Choreographies of collaboration: social engagement in interactive documentaries. *Studies in Documentary Film*, 10(1), 53-70.
<https://www.doi.org/10.1080/17503280.2016.1171686>
- Miller, E. (2018). The Shore Line as Polyphony in Practice: A Case Study. *Alphaville: Journal of Film and Screen Media*, 15, 113-123. <https://www.doi.org/10.33178/alpha.15.08>
- Mirizio, A. (2017). El anacronismo visual en el cine militante de Helena Lumbreras. Notas a propósito de la influencia de Pasolini y Zavattini. *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies*, 18(4), 425-441. <https://www.doi.org/10.1080/14636204.2017.1380156>
- Montero Sánchez, D. (2020). Rethinking participatory video in the times of YouTube. *Media, Culture & Society*, 1-15. <https://www.doi.org/10.1177/0163443720948017>
- Nash, K. (2014). What is interactivity for? The social dimension of web-documentary participation. *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*, 28(3), 383-395.
<https://www.doi.org/10.1080/10304312.2014.893995>
- Nash, K. (2021). *Interactive Documentary. Theory and Debate*. New York: Routledge.
- Pérez, M. A. & Delgado, A. (2012). De la competencia digital y audiovisual a la competencia mediática: dimensiones e indicadores. *Comunicar*, 39(20), 25-34.
<https://www.doi.org/10.3916/C39-2012-02-02>
- Pires, F., Masanet, M-J. & Scolari, C. A. (2019). What are teens doing with YouTube? Practices, uses and metaphors of the most popular audio-visual platform. *Information, Communication & Society*, 24(9), 1175-1191.
<https://www.doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2019.1672766>
- Roberts, T. & Lunch, C. (2015). Participatory Video. In R. Mansell & P. H. Ang (Eds.), *International Encyclopedia of Digital Communication and Society*. London: John Wiley & Sons.
- Roberts, T. & Muñoz, S. (2020). Fifty Years of Practice and Innovation Participatory Video (PV). In J. Servaes (Ed.), *Handbook of Communication for Development and Social Change* (pp. 1195-1211). Singapore: Springer.
- Rogers, M. (2017). Participatory Filmmaking Pedagogies in Schools: Tensions Between Critical Representation and Perpetuating Gendered and Heterosexist Discourses. *Studies in Social Justice*, 11(2), 195-220.

- Rose, M. (2017). Not media about, but media with: co-creation for activism. In J. Aston, S. Gaudenzi & M. Rose (Eds.), *I-docs. The Evolving Practices of Interactive Documentary* (pp. 49-66). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Scolari, C. A. (2016). Estrategias de aprendizaje informal y competencias mediáticas en la nueva ecología de la comunicación. *Revista TELOS*, 1-9.
- Scolari, C. A. (2019). Beyond the myth of the “digital native”. Adolescents, collaborative cultures and transmedia skills. *Nordic Journal of Digital Literacy*, 14(3-04), 164-174. <https://www.doi.org/10.18261/issn.1891-943x-2019-03-04-06>
- Shaw, J. & Robertson, C. (1997). *Participatory Video. A practical guide to using creatively in group development work*. London: Routledge.
- Varghese, D., Olivier, P., Bartindale, T. & Baillie Smith, M. (2020). Towards Participatory Video 2.0. In *CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems* (Association for Computing Machinery), New York, 25-30 April, pp. 1-13. <https://www.doi.org/10.1145/3313831.3376694>
- Vezne, R. (2020). Participatory video: A non-formal education tool for adult educators. *World Journal of Educational Technology: Current Issues*, 12(4), 231-247. <https://www.doi.org/10.18844/wjet.v12i4.5145>
- Villaplana-Ruiz, V. (2015). Tendencias discursivas: cine colaborativo, comunicación social y prácticas de participación en Internet. *adComunica*, 12, 109-126. <https://www.doi.org/10.6035/2174-0992.2016.12.8>
- Walker, G. & Arrighi, J. (2013). Participatory Video as a Catalyst for Informal Learning and Expression: A Review of a PV Training in Uganda, 2012. *LEARNing Landscapes*, 6(2), 409-423.
- Waugh, T., Brendan Baker, M. & Winton, E. (2010). *Challenge for Change: Activist Documentary at the National Film Board of Canada*. Québec: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- White, S. A. (2003). Participatory video: A process that transforms the self and the other. In S. A. White (Ed.), *Participatory video: Images that transform and empower* (pp. 63-101). New Delhi: SAGE.
- Yang, K-H. (2016). *Participatory Video in Adult Education. Cultivating Participatory Culture in Communities*. Singapore: Springer.
- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case Study Research and Applications. Design and Methods*. Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Zemits, B., Maypilama, L., Wild, K., Mitchell, A. & Rumbold, A. (2014). Moving Beyond ‘Health Education’: Participatory Filmmaking for Cross-Cultural Health Communication. *Health Communication*, 30, 1213-1222. <https://www.doi.org/10.1080/10410236.2014.924792>