

Trial and Error in
Journalism and
Communication
Education:

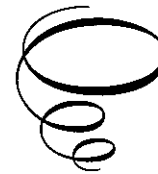
*Between the Classroom
and Industry*

Edited by

Sandra Marinho

and Pilar Sánchez-García

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Trial and Error in Journalism and Communication Education:
Between the Classroom and Industry

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INTRODUCTION

THE CHALLENGES OF JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION EDUCATION IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

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The shifting communicative environment is generating an ever greater need for experimentation in the media, with the creation of laboratories aimed at innovating in narratives in order to provide new tools and to foster a new connection with audiences (Salaverría 2015). At the same time, higher education must adapt to the new multimedia and digital reality by becoming a place for training which is also, and more than ever, linked to experimentation and innovation.

In this new communicative environment, a re-evaluation of communication education is required, since it must seek to meet the digital demands of the news media professions (Born 2014). University-based research labs can help companies to train and promote knowledge transfer in the area of communication. The research scope is broadened and diversified around new narratives, professional profiles, the use of sources through social networks, the ethics of informative contrast, or the emergence of clickbait, among other aspects. In short, there are new communicative paradigms that require new synergies between classroom, laboratory and company. How is it possible to approach the academic and professional fields? How do universities adapt to changes in the sector? What can we learn from these

changes and how do we study them? What challenges are there and what answers can be provided from the classroom to the company and back? These and other fundamental questions are addressed in this book which is focused on the open debate across Europe on the training of journalists in a changing technological future. This is a debate related to the very definition of what a journalist is (Fröhlich and Holtz-Bacha 2003), and in recent decades has been revived around innovation and the relationship between the classroom and companies; between 'research laboratories' and media professions (Sánchez-García 2016; Gardeström 2017; Deloitte 2017; Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch 2020).

This debate is inescapable and we wish to tackle it by building bridges between academia and the newsrooms, at a time when innovation is much needed. At the same time, we find it relevant to re-evaluate the extent to which we might have fallen into an excess of technoeuphoria that subtracts from or forgets the humanistic, multidisciplinary and theoretical training that makes up the critical thinking of journalists (Sánchez-García & Marinho 2015).

The training of journalists in this changing environment, while trying not to lose the essence of quality journalism, is a constant concern for European professors and researchers gathered around ECREA's Temporary Working Group 'Journalism and Communication Education'¹. This temporary group has turned into an international space for debate on the training of journalists and has fostered debates on such fundamental issues as: new training tendencies in the classroom; experiments with multimedia narratives and tools; training in the humanities and social sciences; new training profiles, such as MOJO, data journalists, specialised journalists, etc.; business models and new experiences; teacher recycling; laboratories at universities and media outlets; ethics and critical thinking; the training of journalists with social consciousness; and innovative pedagogies.

All these broad, multidisciplinary and complex issues have been enriched by an international debate. For this reason, we wanted to go a step further

¹ Available on the website: <https://ecrea.eu/Journalism-and-Communication-Education>

and transform these ideas from an unfinished and exciting debate, setting them down in black and white, sharing collected experiences, doubts, questions and classroom proposals.

This book has three main purposes: 1) to provide an updated portrait of journalism and communication education practices across European universities; 2) to discuss new trends and experiences, while exploring their potentialities and limitations; and 3) to establish the classroom as a much needed space for trial and error. We tackle these goals through contributions from expert researchers, while addressing five fundamental issues for the training of journalists and communication professionals: the teaching/learning of new multimedia narratives, new technological skills, new learning tools, training for critical thinking and the relationship between classroom and business.

Ours is a context in which new tools and platforms are offered to journalists, students and journalism and communication teachers. Yet this is also a challenging environment in which these actors are faced with such trials as the blurring of the boundaries between journalism and other communication subjects and products and the rise of fake-news and disinformation. In such a fast changing environment, classrooms must become spaces for Trial and Error in order to keep up.

We offer an updated overview of research and practice in the field of journalism and communication education, even though it is a non-systematic outline (each chapter describes unique teaching experiences). However, it is also a source of learning tools and experiences for teachers and students. We bring to the table the experience of journalism and communication teachers (the authors), some of whom are also professionals, in an attempt to give voice to the practitioners. Teachers are portrayed as professionals in need of continuous training, resources and tools with which to experiment.

This book is structured in two parts: Part I gathers contributions on the topic of "Changing trends in journalism and communication education: between technology and narrative" and the second Part focuses on "Professional Experiences in Journalism and Communication Education: lessons from

practice". In Chapter 1, "The challenges of using moving images and still images in the classroom, in research and professionally", Inês Rebanda Coelho discusses and clarifies legal difficulties when it comes to using images in education and research. Susana Torrado-Morales and María Lourdes Martínez-Rodríguez consider "Education and Sound Spaces. Using Podcasts as a Tool for Learning in Communication Studies" and present us with the first results of their collaborative project at the University of Murcia (Spain). Chapter 3 is dedicated to "Considerations on the application of Project-Based Learning as a teaching strategy in the subject 'Cyber-Journalistic Writing'", in which Koldobika Meso Ayerdi, Jesus Angel Pérez Dasilva, Terese Mendiguren and Orge Castellano Parra share an experience in cooperative learning at the University of the Basque Country, focused on "real situations". Finally, in the last chapter of Part I, titled 'The story first...': The skills, training and profiles newsrooms demand from journalists Pilar Sánchez-García discusses how to train journalism students to operate in an ever changing digital world by paying attention to the fundamentals, i.e., the story.

Part II starts with a student-run lab experience in Advertising and PR training at the Complutense University of Madrid, shared by Giorgio Marchis & Francisco Muñoz-Romero: The "Development of professional skills in an academic environment: *The Studio Junior Communication Agency*". In Chapter 6 – "Perro Come Perro (Dog Eat Dog): an academic project that aims to become an innovative media organisation", Montse Mera, Javier Mayoral, Sonia Parratt and Javier Cabedo describe the learning experience of a meta-journalistic website – a "double dose" of journalism, as they put it – also at the Complutense University of Madrid. Chapter 7 looks at "TV Production in the Classroom – The Challenges of Practical Learning within a Research-Oriented Graduate Programme", where Charmaine Voigt defends the need for more practical-based classes, through an experience of pragmatic-oriented learning, at Leipzig University. The last Chapter - Reportéres em Construção [REC]: a strategic alliance between students, teachers and journalists -, by Pedro Coelho and Sandra Marinho, addresses the implementation of a national project in Portugal that brings together students, journalists, teachers, universities and media outlets.

This book approaches the classroom as a space of 'trial and error' and, therefore, of innovation in the field of journalism and communication education. Teaching and learning experiences are told first-hand by teachers and students. New trends and teaching experiences are described and discussed in a way that enables readers to understand which strategies might work in certain circumstances. By understanding what is actually working, one might be able to adopt and adapt a given approach to one's specific context. Yet the authors' accounts also allow us to discover which strategies have failed and why.

In short, the book provides both a review and a debate, while trying to answer these two emergent questions: 'How are journalists and communication professionals being trained now across Europe, at a moment of communicative transformation?' and 'Does the classroom serve as a space for trial and error, in a constantly changing environment?' The debate does not end here, it must continue.

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PART I—

CHANGING TRENDS IN JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION EDUCATION: BETWEEN TECHNOLOGY AND NARRATIVE

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CHAPTER EIGHT

REPORTERS UNDER CONSTRUCTION [REC]: A STRATEGIC ALLIANCE BETWEEN STUDENTS, PROFESSORS AND JOURNALISTS

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REC – Repórteres em Construção (Reporters Under Construction) is a collaborative learning project that aims to foster and support the training of journalism students in higher education institutions; to develop collaborative activities among (journalism) professors, students and journalists, and to foster creativity in journalism projects. In order to support journalism education, REC aims to establish itself as an intersectional platform that complements academic and professional education (without aiming to constitute an alternative to the formal educational offer). In this context, REC also tries to stimulate the creativity of future professionals and encourage original and innovative work, from a thematic perspective and in terms of new formats and languages: it is a place for "trial and error". REC therefore has no intention to present itself as a media outlet, although partnerships with the media are pursued. This project is focused on a specific news product: the news feature (investigative reports).

REC is currently organised in a network that involves professors and students from 15 higher education programmes across Portugal and journalists from different media outlets. Its formal partners and founding funding sponsors include CENJOR (a national centre for "on the job"

training of journalists), the Sindicato dos Jornalistas Portugueses (National Trade Union of Journalists), the Casa da Imprensa (mutual health association) and the Clube dos Jornalistas (Journalists' Club). Even though it is a training project, it delivers concrete results in terms of journalistic production: the news features produced by the participating students. The results are broadcast by Rádio Renascença (a national radio station) in a monthly radio programme and multimedia reports are published in an online platform¹.

In this chapter, we aim to discuss – from both a theoretical and empirical perspective - the advantages of a type of journalism education that combines academia, industry and journalists. We also describe the process of creating such a project, in particular the difficulties that have arisen to date.

1. Bridging academia and newsrooms: from theory to practice

The evolution of journalism education cannot be understood without considering the genesis and evolution of journalism itself. While it is true that the history of journalism, as a profession and as an academic discipline, is highly conditioned by the barriers that have arisen between journalism and academia over the years (Coelho 2015; Dickson 2000; Deuze 2005; Meditsch 2004; Zelizer 2004), it is equally true that in recent years we have witnessed a growing approximation between these two worlds. In Portugal, this process of approximation has been expressed in several manners. Firstly, the academic world, through journalism courses, has positioned itself as a privileged field for the recruitment of new journalists (Coelho 2015; Fidalgo 2004; Garcia 2009; Marinho 2015; Pinto 2004; Subtil 2009). We have also seen an increased number of professionals who have returned to higher education, to complete master's degrees and PhD degrees and the positive effects that this academic involvement has brought to journalism (Gomes 2012; Rebelo 2011). Effective bridges have also been established between journalism and academic institutions in the creation of postgraduate studies, as a result of partnerships between Portugal's three private generalist television channels and three journalism/communication courses,

¹ <https://www.reporteresemconstrucao.pt/>

in three Portuguese universities². Two further aspects should also be highlighted: the increasing participation of journalists in teaching (as guest professors) and interest by researchers (in university research centres) to pursue research related to journalists and their professional practices and newsrooms.

This reinforced commitment to the field of academic training does not, however, conceal the growing loss of autonomy of journalists in Portugal, as a result of market and technology pressures, expressed in the high levels of job precariousness suffered by journalists (Coelho 2015). This trend is, moreover, global. As Barbie Zelizer acknowledges, journalists immersed “in an economic environment seeping with uncertainty” contribute to leaving journalism “at its point of exhaustion” (2017, 1, 115). Now that journalism has reached this zero point, its refounding is urgent and natural: “with journalism exhaustion comes the potential for journalism height and rebirth” (Zelizer 2017, 7).

In this chapter, we provide a reflection on the role of agents who must participate in the refounding of journalism, firstly by assessing the extent to which academic training can participate in this process, assuming that the stronger the links between academia and journalism, the greater the potential, the survival of which depends on the bridges they can create and strengthen. At REC, we strive to break down the barriers that still persist between theoretical knowledge and practice, as we are aware that theory without practice is abstract, in the same manner that practice without theory is, as Eduardo Meditsch puts it, “a dumb practice” (2004).

The approximation between academic training and journalism, which is conditioned by the market pressures that affect both entities, must be established through a “strategic alliance” (Coelho 2015), which results in the valuation of the specificities of each partner. On the basis of this articulation, there will be a space for dialogue that is very close to the

² Postgraduate studies in journalism - partnership between the Grupo Media Capital - ISCTE-IUL School of Journalism; postgraduate studies in multiplatform journalism - Grupo Impresa-NOVAFCSH partnership (interrupted in the academic year 2019-2020); post-graduate degree in Television and Multiplatform Journalism - Grupo Cofina partnership-UAL.

exercise that Brooke Kroeger defended in 2002, taking advantage of the best of both worlds: “The tools of a reporter can be precision instruments in the hands of a scholar, just as what I will call ‘a scholar’s intent’ produces the best kind of investigative reporting and writing in the journalistic form”. The strategic alliance we advocate is a new place of intersection between reflection and practice; between trial and error; between old and new approaches, old and new profiles. Without intending to occupy the role of the academic world, nor the role of professional journalism, REC occupies this intersectional zone, asserting itself as a natural expression of the strategic alliance.

2. The news feature at the centre of journalism education

As a project that is born from the experience of both journalism professors and journalists, REC translates their perceptions, based on many years of practice, about the way journalism is taught and how it is practiced in academia and in newsrooms. These perspectives have shaped REC’s entire structure and the central ideas that underpin this project.

In the various journalism schools, the knowledge dispersed throughout their study plans, as Zelizer acknowledges, continues to be “approached in pockets, each of which isolates aspects of its environment from others” (2017, 122). To promote articulation through a “holistic approach” (Calvo and Cervi 2017, 1629) is one of REC’s principal challenges, from the outset, as a place in which we use various types of knowledge and experiences, with the purpose of producing brand-new journalistic stories for different platforms. The production process is the result of several interactions: it involves journalists from different generations, journalism and communication professors from various different schools, and students from different schools. In the process of journalistic production, this holistic approach is reflected in the result.

During the period in which we worked offline (from January 2017 to January 2019), we could see that, in the study programmes of the partner schools, especially in the more practical curricular units, the news feature

had tended to be relegated to secondary importance.³ The same thing happens in Portuguese newsrooms, a situation which we observe, above all, in the analysis of the alignment of television news bulletins⁴. In fact, the majority of journalism courses, in the laboratory-based curricular units, focus on news with reactions rather than news features. This has been pointed out by Wayne Robins, who considers that journalism courses are too focused on preparing journalists to deal with day-to-day breaking news and, when graduates are confronted with investigative journalism, they usually flounder. Robins proposes to refocus programmes on the essence of investigative journalism and the demands associated with this type of reporting: preparation, background and recontextualisation. Robins therefore recommends more daring curricula to help students decode the complex issues that face journalists: “without more vision and daring in the curriculum... the student can only skim the surface” (2002).

In her analysis of the contours of the process of re-founding journalism, Zelizer proposes this same spirit of daring. She understands that the trajectory of the “height and rebirth” of journalism must involve a “complex and nuanced enterprise that forces us to stretch beyond reason into imagination so as to better understand and appreciate its trappings” (2017, 7-8). This commitment to imagination and creativity must extend to academic journalism education. Curricula need “to encourage the creative spirit” because only in this way will students be able to develop “creative possibilities” (Keeble 2007, in Zelizer 2017, 2).

The spirit of daring described by Robins, and the imagination mentioned by Zelizer, condense all the ingredients that demand the emergence of a higher number of news features. Becoming more daring, imaginative and producing more news features, while following the “holistic approach” that

³ Our analysis of the study programmes of six Portuguese journalism courses revealed “the clear investment in professional courses in reporting breaking news” (Coelho 2015, 568).

⁴ In the television news bulletins of the free-to-air generalist TV channels, investigative reporting occupies less than 10% of the total daily news production (data collected and systematised by students from the NOVAFCSH Television Journalism course unit, in the months of October and November of 2015, 2016 2017 and 2018, to be updated every year).

characterises such reporting, presupposes a “profound remodelling” of the “educational process” (Calvo and Cervi, 2017: 1629)⁵.

In the same manner that a greater commitment to news features in study plans can be said to be a starting point for the process of revising journalism education, a commitment to this type of reporting must also be assumed to be a pillar of the refounding of journalism itself.

The studies of the Reuters Institute, coordinated by Newman, Fletcher, Kalogeropoulos, Levy and Nielsen, which assess consumer trends in digital media and traditional platforms, highlight the contribution made by (investigative) news reporting, as a pillar of journalistic quality, in the ambitious programme to rebuild journalism. Data reveals that high-quality journalism remains relatively immune to the effects of the journalism crisis, since it stands out amongst the myriad of voices that assault the media space. Indeed, there are evident signs that confidence is being regained through high-quality journalism (Newman, 2017, 9-10; Newman et al, 2017, 26; Newman et al 2018, 31). In fact, in this scenario of permanent uncertainty, which seems to condition the future of traditional news media (“cable news, magazines and newspapers are generally down, local and network TV oscillate yearly”), only the public’s connection to high quality journalism remains stable (“Long form journalism is up”) (State of News Media, in Zelizer, 2017, 115). REC is also pursuing long form journalism by producing a long form news feature once per year.

The commitment to television news in the form of hybrid journalistic genres, in particular news with reactions⁶, that only skim the event, without

⁵ In their analysis of the study programmes in journalism and communication at the most highly regarded universities in the world, published in 2017, Calvo and Cervi (2017) chose the ten main curricular objectives to be attained. This list includes creativity and criticism, a holistic approach in the field of humanities, communication and digital culture and articulation between theory and practice (1634, 1635).

⁶ The same studies carried out by the students of the Television Journalism curricular unit indicate that the percentage of news reporting and news with reactions in the news bulletins of the three free-to-air generalist television channels is around 60 percent.

really delving into it, unlike news features, follows the opposite path to that reflected in the studies of the Reuters Institute and the State of News Media.

REC, through the bridges that it fosters with the academic world, professional world and the different communities that fall within the framework of action of its partner schools, follows the outline traced in 2009 by Leonard Downie Jr. and Michael Shudson, who detected signs of “more participatory and collaborative” investigative reporting emerging “with new supporters beside newsroom staffers: freelancers, university faculty members, students, and citizens”. In 2017, Charles Lewis raised the bar when he proposed a “kind of collaborative, accountability journalism, across fields” which “combine the most authoritative, known information from various disparate sectors, including journalism, but also academic areas of expertise such as investigative history, forensic accounting, computer science and statistics, political science, economics, public anthropology, human rights, public interest, and other law-related fields” (2017, 24). These two different approaches share common goals: they aim to expand the accountability of collaborative journalistic experiences. We are still not prepared to reach the kind of collaboration advocated by Lewis. We even harbour some doubts about whether the huge umbrella that he suggests is the right one to protect journalism from the storm.

We assume that REC is a place for news features, positioned between the academic and the professional worlds and fully integrated into the community. By means of this holistic and multifaceted laboratory, we attempt to overcome the limitations that could undermine the mission of either party involved. That is our specific contribution to the ambitious process of rebuilding journalism.

3. Repórteres em Construção: the genesis and operation of the project

REC is the result of an initiative launched by the organisers of the 4th Congress of Portuguese Journalists, in collaboration with CENJOR (Protocol Centre for Professional Training of Journalists): to create a multiplatform

newsroom, which it called Media Lab⁷ - consisting of journalists, students and professors from various higher education institutions in Portugal - to cover the Congress in January 2017. Although this was not a new idea, it was innovative in Portugal and had very positive results. This was the forerunner for setting up the network of journalism schools that subsequently established REC. Although collaborative teaching in journalism has a well-established tradition, alongside the experience of laboratory-format newspapers, the least common (and most challenging) aspect of this network resides in the fact that it represents the diversity of Portugal as a whole (although it does not yet include all the journalism schools in Portugal), and implies articulation between participants who are geographically dispersed.

The operation of the project is based on a simple idea (see Figure 1): at the beginning of each semester, REC launches a call for submissions, which is sent to the professors who are collaborating with REC in each school. They then challenge their students (individually or in groups) to propose news features (in different formats) in response to the themes (usually six) highlighted in the call. These proposals are then organised by the editor (a journalist or journalism professor) for each theme, who will start to coordinate the team of professors and students from the different schools. For a specific period of time, each team will work on its news feature, supervised by a professor (a mandatory aspect). When the work is already at an advanced stage, a training session will be scheduled with all the teams of professors and students, coordinated by the editor, with the participation of trainers from CENJOR and journalists. With all the intervening parties in the same place (as in a newsroom), each news feature is discussed with everyone and changes are suggested. Students then have a period of time to reformulate their work, until they deliver the final version. The news features for radio are then edited together in a monthly radio programme (that is broadcast by a national broadcaster and later in a podcast⁸) and video

⁷ <https://4congresso.jornalistas.eu/media-lab/>

⁸ <https://www.reporteresemconstrucao.pt/category/podcast/>

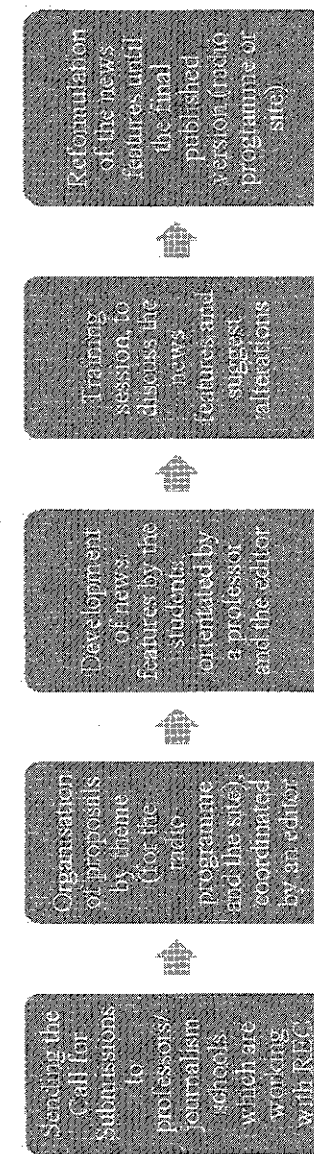


Figure 1: training process, from the initial idea until the publication of the news features

or multimedia news features are published on REC's website. There is also a 'Grande Reportagem' section dedicated to longform journalism⁹.

The Repórteres em Construção radio programme and the website are the visible face of REC and the two platforms that make it possible to disseminate the students' work. Although this is a training project, we know that dissemination / publication is a major incentive for students, and we therefore also value this dimension. The design of the website and the REC logo (see Figure 2) is the work of two students from a course in the area of design, since we considered that it is important for students to be involved in all the dimensions of the project.



Figure 2 – screenshot of REC's website

As a training project, the evaluation of the process and the results is extremely relevant. For REC, such an evaluation is carried out informally (in training sessions), but also through instruments that involve a certain degree of formality (see Figure 3). At the beginning of each school year (and after the call for papers has been sent out), a meeting is held with the professors and editors who belong to the REC network, in order to listen to any difficulties that may exist and collect ideas. This meeting is repeated at the end of the academic year, with a clearer evaluation objective and proposals for changes or innovations to be implemented in the following year. Evaluation of students is essential and is achieved in two ways:

⁹ <https://www.reporteremconstrucao.pt/category/grande-reportagem/>

through an online survey (sent to all participating students) and consultation with the professors. The goal is to identify practices that are more successful and less successful; and to collect suggestions for improvement and topics to be launched in the following year.

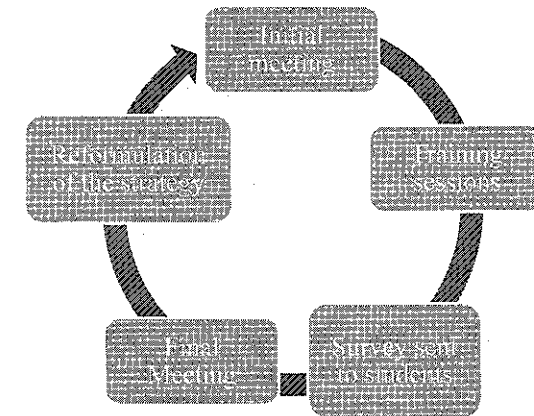


Figure 3 – REC strategy review and reformulation cycle

Although the goal is to ensure that this process of evaluation and reformulation of REC's strategy and practices is systematic, experience has shown us that the best form of consultation is an informal approach, which comes from monitoring the students and professors and the exchange of ideas that arise in that context; from the interaction in the training sessions and the experiences shared by the editors.

This consultation process has resulted in several changes: in the mode of operation, in the definition of the roles of the different actors, and also in the introduction of new formats and modalities. A new 'Grande Reportagem' section was created, which did not initially exist. The REC Ombudsman was created and a new training format was set up - Voice Training and Diction – requested by students who had identified this gap in

their academic training. It was also decided that it was a good idea to publish a REC Style Book, as a training tool¹⁰.

Although the work of REC is structured by a set of standards, it also involves a certain level of informality, which enables changes to be introduced in a short period of time. This is an asset, but a process that involves this level of dynamism also poses several difficulties, as we will see below.

4. The challenges involved in setting up *Repórteres em Construção*

Even though there are suggestions for improvement, REC has received very positive feedback from the participating students, professors and journalists. In terms of results, the most visible aspect is that the news features are published on an uninterrupted basis every month, including the publication of reports on the website and the broadcasting of a radio programme on a national radio station. However, this is a path that still poses several challenges that need to be overcome.

The first challenge is that this is extracurricular work for both students and professors. Although they are naturally motivated, it is inevitably a time-consuming process, on top of existing curricular activities. Some professors mention that there are certain difficulties in motivating students to join, precisely because they are the ones presenting the project. This seems to confirm the idea that it may be worthwhile to have an external person, from REC's coordinating team, to present the project to students, making it easier for them to see that it is something different from that which the academic path offers them. In response to this finding, REC is preparing presentation sessions that may attract more students, since, judging by the feedback to date, students recognise the added value after being integrated into the process, and some even repeat their participation.

¹⁰ https://www.reporteresemconstrucao.pt/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/LivroEstilo_paginas.pdf

It has been equally challenging to articulate students and professors from such distinct schools, that have different training practices and even students at different educational levels (and therefore with different levels of knowledge). In addition, training sessions require that people who are geographically dispersed and have very different levels of availability are present in one place, for an entire day.

Although, as mentioned above, this is not an innovative project outright, it is an innovative development for Portugal. It has the advantage of providing a large field of action, but poses the disadvantage that there is no existing model that can be followed. There have been major changes and adaptations, and as a result processes have been altered in a short period time, which caused some confusion among professors. These essentially concern internal communication difficulties, which we will try to address.

In terms of communication, we have also identified the need to achieve greater external visibility through an integrated communication strategy. This is a project that focuses on journalism: journalism professionals, professors and students. We are currently trying to integrate a team of professors and students from the area of Strategic Communication to help us overcome this difficulty, since it is essential for the spirit of the REC that students develop this integrated communication strategy.

In order to fulfil its objectives, REC stands at the intersection between the academic world and newsrooms, but does not aim to replace them (it is not a course or a news agency). It therefore serves as an intersectional platform, which is what it aims to be. This condition, however, causes the difficulty of not being able to work with the knowledge that has been accumulated. In order to be eligible to take part, students must be attending a higher education degree in communication/journalism, and therefore most students only collaborate with REC on one occasion. As a result, the training activities do not have the chance to be cumulative, except in cases where students repeat their involvement during their undergraduate degrees or return as master's degree students.

Finally, there is the issue of funding, which concerns the news media and REC as well. The project's initial funding was provided by three institutions,

in the wake of the resolution approved by the organisers of the 4th Congress of Portuguese Journalists: the Union of Portuguese Journalists (National Union of Journalists), the Casa da Imprensa (mutual health association) and the Clube dos Journalists (Journalists Club). REC will only be able to ensure its continuity if it can find new financial partnerships, which has not been an easy path.

These are difficulties that have been addressed as challenges, barriers to be overcome and problems to be solved.

Final Remarks

As a final comment, we would like to reinforce the idea that a possible path - the one that we have chosen to follow - in order to rethink journalism and journalism education is that of a "strategic alliance" between academia and newsrooms; between students, professors and journalists; in the classrooms and newsrooms.

This is a laborious and challenging path and, in truth, at the present time we still do not have sufficient results to legitimate this option, except for the testimonies of students and professors who have taken part in REC and the fact that we have managed to maintain the regular production of one theme per month: a radio programme on a national radio station and multimedia work for the site.

In the immediate future, it is important to expand the network of partners, not only in terms of funding sponsors, but also other media outlets and more Communication /Journalism schools (with the hope that we can include all schools in the network). It would also be relevant to look at this experience based on research, looking, for example, at REC's journalistic production or following the careers of students who have collaborated with REC. These are ideas to be explored over the coming years.

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