

Chapter 16

Pedagogical Guidelines to Introduce Transmedia Learning into the Classroom: The Brazilian Context

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ABSTRACT

Transmedia learning has been adopted as a theoretical and practical approach aimed at young students learning with technologies. It allows for open, dynamic, and engaging teaching and learning, integrating the school curriculum with life and sociocultural demands in a continuous information flow. This paper presents some pedagogical guidelines for introducing transmedia learning into the classrooms. For this, we will take into account the Brazilian context regarding the technologies and media available in Brazilian public schools, the media literacy of students and teachers, and the rules derived from the management team.

INTRODUCTION

The processes which have been founded for communication and sociability mediated by means of electronic networks are complex. However, it is not enough to use technical appropriations to understand the economic, cultural, social, and political dimensions of virtual spaces which have used the bimodal communication method (provid-

ing and receiving information). Therefore, not only are modes of consumption and production of information necessary, but also the access to cultural sphere is modified in that process.

In turn, the role of the individual changes from that of being just a consumer and passive spectator (critical or not) to being a critical consumer and active producer. This is not a natural and simple process. On the contrary, it requires individual and

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collective efforts to become a social actor who is aware of the implications of his global and local actions in the virtual and physical spaces that he frequents.

For this to take place, it requires the individual to understand the opportunities that have been opened up with the new interactional forms afforded by the mobility and connectivity in the network. There is an immeasurable amount of information to be accessed, analyzed, evaluated, selected, shared, edited, and reproduced concerning new signs and languages in technology and media. That is a complex process for an individual in an interconnected world, because to be an aware citizen both on- and offline requires not only text literate but also one who is media literate.

Our constant contact with young students¹ had led to one of the problems we have found concerning media literacy. Students have not mobilized some skills in the process of interaction with the world across various technologies and media. These devices could be the instrument for emancipation and social transformation in their life.

In this perspective, we refer to the mobilization of skills and competencies that will support sociocultural practices so that young students are not just consumers of media content but also citizens, exerting a critical and conscious participation on the communication process. Livingstone (2004) has argued: “Only if these are firmly foregrounded in a definition of media literacy will people be positioned not merely as selective, receptive and accepting but also as participating, critical; in short, not merely as consumers but also as citizens.”

Referring to the importance of skills and competences of media literacy, Mimi Ito calls attention to a facts about our students cannot be ignored and that meets our concerns: “Beyond what they are learning in school, they are connecting socially and are being influenced by each other’s knowledge” (Ito quoted by Reilly 2009, p. 9). The author also says that: “these informal mentors have effectively taken their place among

the many sources influencing children’s processes of knowledge-building and identity-forming”. It is important to mediate these new communicational ways that the children are involved.

Another problem that we have found is the fact that teachers give priority to school literacy. In other words, they just select the skills and competences that the students will develop and mobilize in function of what they will be requested to do in the formal and national exams.

This direction draws the school away from the spaces where the students are interacting with others. As a result, we have a literacy process which is not contextualized and not connected with the sociocultural demand of a student’s surroundings. As Freire and Shor (1986) argued, this action reveals the dichotomy and highlights the division between the “words of school” and the “words of reality”.

To minimize these problems we propose transmedia learning as a pedagogical approach to introduce media literacy into public schools, considering the Brazilian context². We also suggest some pedagogical guidelines for its application in the classroom through a connection between teaching and learning, the school curriculum, media literacy, and the transmedia storytelling approach.

With transmedia learning, we intend to promote learning from the exploration of knowledge. Students will be involved in the discovery through their own initiative, inside and outside of school, to allow them to develop skills in media literacy.

METHODS

Study Subjects

In order to understand some pedagogical situations in the school in which we carried out our research, we needed to know the ways and procedures that our research teachers adopted in order to interact through technology and media. As we get to know

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