Chapter 22
Developing English Language Teachers' Professional Capacities through Digital and Media Literacies:
A Brazilian Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This chapter aims to demonstrate how a group of educators from a southern Brazilian state university designed and implemented formative workshops to sustain English language teachers' professional development through digital and media literacies. The chapter maps important changes that have happened in language teacher education in Brazil and the convergences these changes share with digital and media literacies coming from a sociocultural paradigm. It also presents and discusses the extent to which the instructional material the group of educators produced for the continuing education of English language teachers integrated 21st century skills and the standards from the TESOL technology framework. As a way to evaluate the instructional material, the chapter analyzes the representations and identities schoolteachers constructed when engaging with digital and media literacies through the instructional material. The chapter concludes by advocating more social, political and collaborative future research in language teacher education and digital and media literacies.

INTRODUCTION

The foundational discourses that shape and actively transform educational practices are often multiple and contradictory. Similarly, the roles language teachers perform in promoting adequate and challenging conditions for children and young people to learn in the so-called networked society are varied. On the one hand, teachers themselves are expected to use, to critically appreciate and to engage with diverse social practices. On the other hand, it is part of teachers' professional responsibility to plan and design situated and meaningful language pedagogies. These pedagogies, in turn, should aim not only to prepare young people for the future but also to help them critically engage with and transform a world in constant change and fluidity.

Such challenges become even more pressing if educators shift their focus to digitally mediated language practices. Language teacher educators are confronted by a myriad of discourses and face challenges on to how to develop, design and implement teacher education programs aligned with the contemporary digitally mediated landscape. Similarly, teacher educators aim to create opportunities for schoolteachers to critically interrogate the assumptions deriving from the imperatives surrounding digital technology use in the network society.

Based on such scenario, a number of teacher educators from a southern Brazilian state university developed and implemented formative workshops for English language teachers to foster their digital and media literacies. These workshops were funded by the Brazilian Federal Agency for Higher Education Professional Development (CAPES) program called 'New Talents'. The program, which took place from 2011 to 2012, aimed to support proposals that could offer extracurricular activities for schoolteachers and students from secondary education. Such extracurricular activities were meant to promote scientific knowledge dissemination and contribute to the professional development of teachers. The proposal under which the reported experience occurred was entitled "Education of teachers and students from the secondary education: opportunities, practices, exchange of knowledge/experiences, leverage of the creativity and alignment to the challenges of the globalized society".

In order to offer formative workshops for teachers, we developed instructional materials that explored digital and media literacies and that created conditions for teachers themselves to produce activities for secondary school students. The instructional materials developed and the formative workshops designed are the objects of analysis of this chapter. Therefore, the objectives of this chapter are:

A. To demonstrate how a group of educators from a southern Brazilian state university designed and implemented formative workshops to sustain English language teachers' professional development through digital and media literacies;
B. To analyze to what extent the 21st century skills and the standards from TESOL technology framework were integrated in the formative workshops designed and implemented;
C. To analyze the representations and identities language schoolteachers constructed when engaging with digital and media literacies.
D. To consider sustainable ways of providing English language schoolteachers with professional development opportunities through digital and media literacies.

The remainder of the chapter is organized into five broad sections. In the first two sections, we present and discuss important changes that have occurred in language teacher education in Brazil and in digital and media literacies. We then move on to present and analyze the instructional material designed

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