PRACTICAL PROPOSAL FOR THE APPLICATION OF AUDIOVISUAL RESOURCES AS SUPPORT FOR TEACHING IN ARTISTIC EDUCATION

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Abstract

This work analyzes the advantages and disadvantages encountered during execution of an audiovisual project, developed in the course "The Art and Visual Culture in Primary Education". The obtained results clearly show that the incorporation of digital tools and the grouping of students into teams encourage cooperative work and motivate the interest of students usually saturated by theoretical work and master classes.

Keywords: Audiovisuals, Artistic education, Information and Communication Technologies.

1 INTRODUCTION

One of the new tasks associated with improving teaching and learning processes in higher education, is to achieve new cooperative models that strengthen the global growth of the students. Educational contexts like the European Higher Education Area, or online learning, bring big challenges to us, and demand different teaching methods; specially those regarding the arts education field, which consists of different disciplines, all tremendously conditioned by the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), and digital graphic tools. The implementation of these tools, all of them able to get the interest and attention of the students, means both a renewal and an update of teaching methodologies, which have undoubtedly contributed to this said progress in the arts teaching field.

Most of teachers, showing their concern in encouraging their students, have been betting on incorporating new technologies into teaching, thus achieving to improve the methodology used, by using tools that can benefit how their students learn, plus increasing their motivation and interest in topics concerning the discipline they are learning.

As Pantoja and Huertas [1] (2010) well expound, real integration of the ICT could open the door to a new era for the education system. For these authors, their use in teaching fields makes possible the creation of new environments, in which the teaching-learning process favours access to a large amount of information and the interaction of knowledge about the most varied cultures via Internet. Tools capable of encouraging teamwork and that also give students more autonomy, empowering auto-learning and favouring collaborative learning [2]. Besides, these tools allow the appearance of strategies in where inclusive proposals are promoted and where interactive practices are a priority in building knowledge in a cooperative way [3].

Thanks to all that, that the future of education bets on innovation and learning methodologies which go much further than exclusively relying on traditional resources used inside the classroom [4], is just a real fact. Nowadays, contact between technology and communications media results practically unavoidable. We live in a world where webpages, such as Youtube, and a huge number of mobile applications for smartphones are becoming the main pastime of the youngest and the most usual search tools in their way to solve problems. A time where predominance of technology in anyone’s everyday life is much more than apparent, going so far as to be able to acquire any kind of information within our reach with just a “click”. So, the necessity of adapting ourselves to these new times looks inevitable, by incorporating the most up-to-date technologies and resources, like the availability of the Internet, audio-visual applications or digital format, to class activities, thus moving a typical way of entertainment of the youngest close to the teaching field.

The digital entertainment creative industry has developed tools that accomplish not just the goals related to leisure or entertainment, but also cover specific objectives that could well be used in the education field, being then able to be valued within the school and university learning environments. That is the case of the Youtube platform, a showcase for audio-visual material where knowledge is no more linear, but interrelated, interactive and enriching for students, whose information source are
videos found all over this website [5], presenting the audio-visual media as something close and that can be used by anyone.

Though audio-visual material usage is frequently associated to subjects related to the arts field, several studies and research works reveal that its incorporation into any kind of subject [6] or at an academic level [7], can be feasible; not just as a methodological complement, by using segments of movies, series or documentaries that present some educational content related to the subject in question, but also, as practical work for students whose academic profile, in principle, has nothing to do with technological or audio-visual disciplines at all [8].

Starting from these premises during the actual academic course, second year students of the “Plastic Arts and Audio-Visual Culture in Primary Education” subject, of the degree in Primary Education at the University of Jaén, were proposed to carry out an audio-visual project, about five minutes long, which main topic was fundamentally linked to the educational system, and it was pretended to adapt practical activities and this methodology to a model that would be able to better draw students’ interest, thus favouring cooperative work, all this, without disturbing the overall competence of the students or the specific objectives demanded in the teaching guide of the subject.

2 BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

At the beginning of the academic course, and, in order to let us know the students’ acceptance level of arts education, our students were surveyed about their knowledge on drawing and the classical dynamics of the arts education given during previous years in the subject “Plastic Arts and Audio-Visual Culture in Primary Education”. The results of this small questionnaire showed us an absolute lack of preparation and willingness of the Primary Education degree students towards the drawing arts field, maybe, thanks to the conservative ideas coming from the traditional teaching methods that may result unappealing to students completely discouraged by a discipline, in principle, considered by them unrelated to their interests. If their formation in Primary Education is mainly focused on teaching, why would they find drawing or any other artistic process useful in their career?

Nevertheless, the importance of arts education in schools is something that is beyond doubt. In a video presented in 1987 at the MoMa (Museum of Modern Art), New Yorker artist Lichtenstein already stated that drawing was a way to describe thoughts in a quick and efficient manner. Because of this and having taken into account these lacks we found in courses before university ones, it sounds logic that we stress on including activities that strengthen the students’ artistic and creative capabilities, both in Elementary Education grades and Primary ones; where students will possibly rely on images, videos and drawings for the future presentation of their classes if they become teachers themselves. Activities that will completely run away from academic drawing and exercises about copying images. Quite the opposite the artistic field of drawing will we shown as a language in its own right, capable of transmitting ideas and concepts by itself.

Furthermore, from the point of view of training interest of Primary Education students, it is convenient that we get to know more creative learning strategies, based on, for example, using new technologies or audio-visual media as pedagogical instruments.

Following these ideas and trying to banish that discouragement, as we try to promote creative and didactical attitudes between students by the way, the conduction of an audio-visual project was proposed, in which, along with video recording and edition, drawing could also find its way in—even if they were not aware of that at first, though—.

The main objectives we pursue with the development of this project are as follow:

- To acquire resources and tools that help us develop teaching strategies.
- To produce didactic resources and educational materials for education.
- To encourage creative strategies by the implementation of videos and audio-visual activities.
- To make the students break into video editing and audio-visual language for its didactical application.
- To favour teamwork and self-learning.
- To get students’ attention and adapt the existing methodologies to the new times.
3 METHODOLOGY

As our first step in the completion of the proposed audio-visual project, students were recommended to form groups of around five people. Each team began their work with a brief brainstorming session about the concepts that would be talked about in their respective short-films, preferably topics with certain didactical intentions or related to the educational system. An easy task that brought social reality to the classroom, thus favouring the intervention and involvement of the students and their personal implication in the work they would develop through the rest of the course. This initial participation was essential for the development of the project, as it is an important fact at the time of motivating students and makes them take part in the teaching-learning process, because in this kind of team practices, students themselves claim the credit for their own acquired learning [9]. One full class was dedicated to this activity and the results were very diverse between the different groups, as they showed interest in issues related to environmental education, bullying and gender violence, among other things.

Once the story of the short film is raised it was necessary that the students graphically expressed how they would tell it on screen. Drawing was subtly incorporated into their activities this way, by asking them to design a storyboard. Thanks to this practice, whose duration lasted around two weeks approximately, drawing was now introduced in a complete different way, as a graphic language needed to translate the group’s own ideas and concerns into paper.

The storyboard format seemed to be the ideal one for the students, who had no habit or vocation for drawing at all, to begin making contact with this artistic medium. Curiously, during those days, and after showing them some examples and even drawing along with them, many students began to show interest in illustration techniques, such as inking or colouring, with the purpose of improving the final appearance of their works.

Through examples seen in popular movies and series like Jurassic Park, The Lord of the Rings or Game of Thrones, amongst others, they were simultaneously initiated in basic and theoretical concepts of the audio-visual language (shot types, rhythm editing, colour, lightning, music, etc.), as well as their correct application in the production of a short film.

Finally, following a shot by shot correctly structured story using the storyboard, the process of video recording and edition began. This process took around three weeks. The majority of the recordings were made during non-working hours, using classes to revise all their unedited recordings and to decide on whether to choose or replace those segments that would finally made their way into their finished video.

It has to be stressed that this exchange of ideas resulted in a mutual learning experience between the teacher and the students. We must also note the fact that, although the department put various digital cameras normally used for the explanation of some practical content at our disposal, every group remained auto-sufficient and able to get their own recording systems ranging from photo cameras to the latest generation mobile phones, which met the requirements imposed of panoramic format (16:9) and high quality resolution (Full HD 1080). One point which strengthens the fact that audio-visual resources are becoming a familiar and nearby asset for today’s youngsters who have every kind of tools at their disposal that can be fully exploited in the classroom.

4 RESULTS

To know the satisfaction degree of our students during the lessons and to check if the inclusion of audio-visual media in practices really served as an incentive that also promoted cooperative learning, once the course ended, we got our students surveyed through six questions that covered issues related to the new methodology proposed in the subject. In each of the questions, they were asked a simple task, if they agreed or not with what was being mentioned in each question and a section where they could justify their answers was included, so that we could get to know more precisely the valuation given by the students to each topic they were asked about.

The provided questionnaire is as follows:

1. Do you consider that the proposed activities did help you in your training as a future teacher?
2. Do you think the incorporation of audio-visual activities has encouraged your participation in class?
3. Do you think the proposed practice has fostered teamwork?
4 Do you find the used methodology consistent with the contents of the subject?

5 In relation to other teaching methods, do you consider the one used as appropriate for the explanation of contents of this subject?

6 In general, are you satisfied with the teaching methodology used in class?

Despite the subject had ended some months ago, forty students answered the questionnaire and in many cases they supported each answer they gave with arguments, offering us the possibility to valuate and make a study using this teaching experience as a basis.

From a total of 240 answers, there were just four negative ones, two of them regarding the first question provided and the other two concerning the fifth one.

In regards of the negative answers to the first and fifth questions “Do you consider that the proposed activities did help you in your training as a future teacher?” And “In relation to other teaching methods, do you consider the one used as appropriate for the explanation of contents of this subject?” the answers added no justification or argumentation at all in three out of the four cases. However, one of them advised to include more theoretical content related to their formation as future teachers. This is why, in order to address the identified weaknesses of our methodology that could be encountered in relation to these questions, and taking the discipline of the grade in which this subject was provided, into account, a solution for future courses could be to expand the theoretical block of this course with aspects that would go deeper into the use of audio-visual resources as complementary teaching material, avoiding this way to focus the practice time only on artistic or creative activities.

The rest of the answers were positive (more than the 98 percent of them) showing the high level of acceptance towards the methodological process used. In a general way, and building on the justified comments accompanying the affirmative answers our prototype activity received, it has to be emphasized that students show themselves to be grateful to every sign of an evaluation based on projects, and also, to a more personalized teaching that motivates an active implication of the students and a more practical and encouraging approach to cooperative work. Equally, it results quite interesting that generally the students shared the understanding that the subject had shown them a different point of view, entertaining and fun, about plastic arts and audio-visual culture.

5 CONCLUSIONS

In the education area, teaching formation is a constant and it needs to be up-to-date in new teaching methodologies and not just in subject contents. The use of new technologies, the implementation of sound, image and images in movement, has created a new tool in the field of teaching that broadens the integration and participation of the students in class activities.

This work has proposed a new teaching methodology in which we can take advantage of the audio-visual medium as a complementary teaching tool, but also as a practical activity. Accordingly, the elaboration of an audio-visual project by teams consisting of a maximum of six people was proposed for the “Plastic Arts and Audio-Visual Culture in Primary Education” subject, which belongs to the second year of the degree in Primary Education. The results obtained from this experience make it clear that both the incorporation of popular movie and series segments, as reference of the most important contents of the course, and the inclusion of audio-visual artistic practices, promote a more participative and motivational cooperation of the students. Results that can qualitatively differ from those obtained with those that can be obtained by applying classic teaching methods, which allow the validity of the incorporation of audio-visual media into teaching, capable of attracting the attention of the students.

REFERENCES


