DIGITAL LITERACY FROM ORAL HISTORY OF OITEIRO COMMUNITY

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Abstract

This paper discusses some results of an investigation of digital literacy, in a country school of initial grades of elementary education in a municipal educational system, involving the community to construct different medias from oral history about the community. The study comprised of an action research with a model of intervention based on the creation of the oral history of the community within a class of 4th grade of elementary school. The students constructed newspapers with the history written involving the members of the community. Finally, the community members get involved in such a way that they started to demand courses for their own literacy, language and digital.

Keywords: Digital literacy, Innovation, country education, oral history.

1 INTRODUCTION

This paper refers to a research about a digital literacy experience at a school in a country community. The access to digital devices by children has accentuated the distance between digital literacy of different members of the community, such as children and their parents. In this research, we started with the following problem:

How to generate new models of digital literacy that value community knowledge, to help to reduce this gap?

Manoel Domingos de Melo is a municipal school of initial grades of elementary education, located in the countryside of Vitória de Santo Antão – Pernambuco - Brazil. The School was selected to be part of the “Connected Country Schools” project with the support of QUALCOMM and Fundação Telefônica Vivo. QUALCOMM installed the technology that gives access to a 4G connection, a donation to the School of Tablets, and the Foundation supported teacher and students’ training program to work on innovation projects mediated by digital technologies. It was equipped with 4G technology and a tablet per student, from 3rd grade classes. Other 20 tablets were received to be used in rotational systems with pupils from pre-school to 2nd grade classes.

The community of Oliteiro, where the school is located, is composed of approximately 1,000 people who are in their majority family-based agriculture. Not only the school became one of the schools with the highest connectivity in Brazil, but their families came to have this access, because children take home the equipment.

This reality has produced:

a) the need for discussions about teaching practices, digital literacy, literacy, access to content and social media;

b) the need for greater community and school engagement.

An example of this is the discussions held within the school around the following questions:

− What is digital literacy?
− What kinds of activities should students do at home with their families?

All these changes in teaching practice, and in the school culture, have been discussed in the process of construction of the proposal of the Political Pedagogical Project and the pedagogical teacher training in the school. Discussions and reflections on the challenges that the school needs to take into consideration regarding: the importance of developing learning scenarios that consider the real problems of the community and the technologies as means to build new social relationships that take account local reality.
Such discussions profoundly touch upon the teaching practice in the sense that the old metaphors of acquisition and participation in the production of knowledge are insufficient to consider the processes of creation and transformation of the community culture itself and of the teaching culture [1]. They are related to how to generate new models of teaching and learning, new processes, new products and new forms of coexistence that consider the expansion of learning beyond school walls [2].

In this sense, a project was developed in the School with the objective of rescuing the history of the community through the dialogue between the School and the Community. It is a project titled "Oral History as a Resource for Valuing, Rescuing and Strengthening the History of Local Community." It involved all the school teachers, and each class built different processes and products. The part of this project that will be discussed is work developed within students of 4th grade of elementary school, in a digital literacy perspective as social practices produced in interaction with the community and mediated by digital technologies.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research was theoretically based on the concept of digital literacy, oral history and the expansive learning theory.

2.1 Digital Literacy

Technology in education is still concentrated to constant teacher’s training on how to use this or that tool in education. However, the concept of digital literacy is related to the set of literacies or social practices that are intertwined through digital artifacts for specific purposes. They refer to how digital technologies are practiced socially, in the definition of [3]:

1Digital literacy (DLs) are sets of literacies (social practices) that support each other, intertwined, and appropriately mutually and continuously through digital devices for specific purposes; both in geographically and temporally limited sociocultural contexts, while they are constructed by electronically mediated interaction. (p.16)

In this viewpoint, it is not only a question of learning the symbolic systems of digital representations, but of living the social insertion of technologies that enable its use in a transformative way in each students’ day-life context. It aims participation in local activities, identification of problems and of possible solutions mediated and supported by technologies.

In this sense, the purpose of the experiment, designed and analyzed in this paper, is not only to make use of digital devices themselves, but also to master techniques and abilities to access, interact, process and develop a multiplicity of skills in reading the most varied media and the most diverse textual genres. In addition, it aims to develop social practices that rely on the mediation of digital technologies.

Thus, the concept of literacy focuses on use reading and writing to think and to act in a contextualized way with the environment that is inserted, being able to participate and interact within existing social practices and, mainly, to learn to know and use this knowledge in a transformative way [4].

In order to understand how digital literacy contributes to learning process in subject's life, we begin with the following questions:

- How can we sensitize students to feel as historical subjects, builders and producers of this process, in which they recognize and identify themselves with the history of their community?

- What actions can be taken in Oiteiro community and with the students, through the work with orality, regarding oral history, thus furthering a sense of belonging, interest in their locality, students' self-esteem in a more efficient use of technologies?

We then reflect on what strategies would be needed to address our major challenge, which comprised of develop practices within teaching and learning process that aim to alphabetize, literate and digitally literate learners. In order words, which goals need to be drawn and planned so that 4th grade students can not only read words, phrases, texts, but can stand and understand in the real world, take a critical viewpoint of the world they live.
As it is points out by [5]

2 [...] the school is still restricted to printed text and it does not enable students to read texts in different medias. It is quite important that school further to students the contact to different genres, supports and medias written texts, though, for example, of experiences and knowledge of space that text circulates, the ways they are acquired and the access to texts and of diverse written supports... incorporate even more digital technologies that the students and the educators can learn, write and express through them. (p. 36)

In this sense, it no longer makes sense to focus teaching on practices disconnected with the reality and the environment that subject is inserted. It needs to rethink the methodology and to propose activities that seek reflection and autonomy of the student. The use of technology makes it possible to assist in this mediation.

Technology, according to [6], is a means of participation, generating the manifestation of a constantly changing and reconfiguring environment in which access to information enables new practices of reading, writing, learning and thinking evolve.

Incorporation of digital technologies in educational field can provide teaching/learning processes that are increasingly interactive, interdependent and plural, in a way that it is articulated with all involved subjects’ reality, given instruments available: data resources, voice, images, texts, animations, links [7].

We know that the contributions of practices that are used of new technologies are innumerable, it provides the question of world understanding, its autonomy and most importantly its authorship, thinking about it, our practices constituted in activities which resulted in the production of informative newspaper of the community, with students and the community, in which diverse textual genres, interviews, script, poetry and reports were experienced.

In this sense, [8] highlights,

3 The hypertextual literacy is a kind of umbrella that houses an infinity of literatures that are intertwined, because often the understanding of the senses is realized only if the user has more than one literacy. However, I realize that in this interlacing, one or the other type of literacy can be highlighted, and therefore, not all types are needed in the same interaction. (p. 156)

Regarding alphabetization and “literacy” [9] emphasizes that she differentiates these two practices,

4 [...] alphabetization translates into restricted and limited teaching and learning of basic reading and writing skills, with clear boundaries and cumulatively defined points of progression. Literacy, in turn, refers to the result of the development of continuous, non-linear, multidimensional and unlimited action, beyond this basic learning of reading and writing, thus acquiring a social group or an individual inserted in the practices of A new state or a new condition "in the cultural, social, political, linguistic, and psychic aspects" (p. 39).

In this regard, we believe that alphabetization, literacy and digital literacy cannot be separated, since one is the complementary base that the latter providing a rich and meaningful learning space for students, that is, learners have access to new supports and resources for reading and writing. [10] affirms that it is difficult to prepare and to develop someone in its totality without inserting in its teaching and learning process the use of technologies, because besides allowing it to be understood, it helps them in interacting and acquiring new knowledge.
In this experience, for example, the community was the curricular base of teachers and students. The flow of social practices and the interactions that its residents develop in their community were the starting point for the construction of knowledge. To collect this information, the following tools were built by the students:

- a) digital interview scripts to dialogue with the residents;
- b) photographs of the streets, houses and public spaces of the community;
- c) podcast produced for the narratives of histories;
- d) digital newspapers produced;
- e) texts with the narratives of their own histories life, intertwined with the history of the community;
- f) a collective moment to make available to the residents the history built from the orality of its residents.

3 METHODOLOGY

An action research was carried out within 25 students of 4th grade of elementary school, in a perspective of digital literacy as social practices produced in interaction with the community and mediated by digital technologies.

The research was designed within five moments, starting with the rescue of the history of the community through semi-structured interviews, photographs collection and video record and in a literacy approach comes the production of a documentary about the community. The experiences were recorded by the students themselves in a process of registration, reflection and dialogue with the community. The project lasted for one month.

The figure 1 shows the five moments

![Figure 1. Distribution of the moments.](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N.</th>
<th>Moments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Storytelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Knowing geographically their community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Planning the visit to the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Field trip</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4 RESULTS

In this text, we describe the experience meanwhile we draw the analyses, into the five moments

4.1 Storytelling

A moment of storytelling, discussing what is the historical subject and the importance of valuing the history of each one, with shared oral reading of the complementary didactic book: "Who is Glory?". After reading the book, a dialogue about the history read was carried out. An individual activity was then proposed, in which each one told his/her own story, from questions about his/her history and his/her family. Some of the questions in the questionnaire were:

1. What is your name?
2. What is your most important event?
3. What is your dream life?
4. How old are you?
5. How is your family?

The questionnaire answers was transformed into a text, built in the application "SNOTE" available on tablets. After the textual production, we made corrections and collective reading of the texts produced...
by the students so that their stories were recorded in podcast audios in groups of five students. The application used was mp3 maker. While some made their recordings, other members of the group recorded filming.

**Figure 2. Activities of the first moment.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semi-structured Questionnaire</th>
<th>SNOTE App</th>
<th>MP3 Maker App</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Construction of the historical narrative of each student, from some perspectives</td>
<td>Transformation of the answers of the questionnaire into a textual narrative</td>
<td>Production of Podcasting of life history of each student</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.2 Knowing geographically their community

The next moment, we worked in groups with Google Earth app, in order to identify and observe the location of our school, the village of Oiteiro and Vitória de Santo Antão city, so that the students recognize their locality in the world. From this experience, we conducted a field research, and a record of the physical and historical characteristics of the community.

At this moment, a dialogue was undertaken from this activity with the following problematizations:

- What is this place?
- Do you recognize where your home is, the school?
- How many miles from Oiteiro to the city of Vitoria?

It was also proposed the exploration in Google Earth of other locations in the city of Vitória de Santo Antão, places and points known to them.

**Figure 3. Activities done in the second moment.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open Questionary</th>
<th>Google Earth</th>
<th>Field research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It aims to identify the geographic characteristics of the community</td>
<td>Identify the location of the community and its relationship to other points on the map</td>
<td>Register physic, social and cultural community characteristics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.3 Planning the visit to the community

In a third moment, we jointly plan how the community visits would be, defining the possible sites and the interviewees, according to the data needed for digital production in the history of the community. In addition, we elaborated the questions for the respective interviewees: oldest resident of the community, a horticulture worker and the school manager. The last group produced a text about the community with the theme "the place where I live", and they selected which text would be part of the digital and printed newspaper.

**Figure 4. Activities undertaken in the third moment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research with the resident planning</th>
<th>Elaboration of questions of the interview</th>
<th>Production of the text with theme “the place where I live”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What would be the places to be visited and the residents interviewed: oldest residents; horticulturalists; and the school manager</td>
<td>Open questionnaires for each selected subject: oldest resident; horticulturalists, and school manager</td>
<td>A committee formed by the students selected which text would be part of the newspaper (digital and printed)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4 Field trip

Figure 5. Students visit to the community.

Then, we made a field trip to the community with registration of photos and interviews, visited some of the main points of the community, such as the square, church, social welfare center, two older merchants, some streets and a horticulture place in which we interviewed several workers. This moment was very fruitful to leave the theory of discussions in classroom and to go to the field. The students had the opportunity to show where they live, to film and to photograph, in order to bring to classroom new discoveries.

Images reads from photographs taken by the students and their interpretation of the interview data in the field research, carried out previously, were used in the processes of literacy and discussions of the textual genres.

The groups were formed and each group got a production activity of the newspaper. We did a discussion about how a newspaper is composed from the slide show: what is, how it is done, the cover function, images, topics, topics, titles and what would their newspapers look like on the Oiteiro site, our first copy.

Figure 6. Caption for the figure.
4.5 Evaluation

Finally, we performed an evaluation of the whole process with the class about our final result and product. Families and the community were invited to know the results of the activity they participated in and helped to build.

In this meeting, many demands arouse from parents and other members of community, mainly related to feel the gap they started to feel between their knowledge and their child’s knowledge. Most demands focused on literacy and digital literacy. From their demands, a new project, in which the school expand their frontiers and interacts directly in the parents training, had started. Nowadays, two courses had begun, one aims digital literacy of the community regarding the use of internet for citizens’ services; the other aims the literacy, for reading and writing, many are still analphabet.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The activities built in a collaborative way with the students and participation of the community enabled the mastery of techniques and skills to access, interact, process and develop a multiplicity of skills in reading the most varied media and the most diverse textual genres. The construction of narratives about local history, through the oral history of its residents, contributed to the students’ knowledge and recognition of their individual and social identity, thus furthering a sense of belonging and interest in their locality. In addition, various social interactions involving the school community and community began to be supported and mediated by digital tools, such as: dialogue to produce the interviews, video-records of the stories of the older residents by teachers and children, rescue in podcasting the life history of each student, dialogue to understand the problems related to working conditions, basic sanitation, transportation, medical care and the origins of the community.

The use of communication tools such as hangout and media productions has contributed to the constant exchange of ideas, increased textual production, reading, communication through audio-visual resources and the collective production of meanings of the context in which they are inserted.

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