



ARTÍCULOS

UTOPIAYPRAXISLATINOAMERICANA. AÑO: 24, n°EXTRA 5, 2019, pp.19-24
REVISTAINTERNACIONAL DEFILOSOFÍAYTEORÍASOCIAL
CESA-FCES-UNIVERSIDAD DELZULIA.MARACAIBO-VENEZUELA.
ISSN1315-5216/ISSN-e:2477-9555

Developing a digital learning environment as a condition of digital citizenship

Desarrollo de un entorno de aprendizaje digital como condición para una ciudadanía digital

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the following article is to address the issue of civic education in digital culture. In countries with a small volume of local media education initiatives, analyzing evolving communication culture is essential. This communication culture analysis indicates the need for a new social contract for the university that falls within the scope of consumer logic. The results indicate that effective social interaction, within and outside the university, is possible through the profound influence of new media on educational practices and daily life.

Keywords: digital culture, social interaction, transforming communicative culture, university.

RESUMEN

El propósito del siguiente artículo es abordar el tema de la educación cívica en la cultura digital. En países con un pequeño volumen de iniciativas locales de educación en medios, es esencial analizar la evolución de la cultura de la comunicación. Este análisis de la cultura de comunicación indica la necesidad de un nuevo contrato social para la universidad que se encuentre dentro del alcance de la lógica del consumidor. Los resultados indican que la interacción social efectiva dentro y fuera de la universidad es posible a través de la profunda influencia de los nuevos medios en las prácticas educativas y la vida cotidiana.

Palabras clave: Cultura comunicativa transformadora, cultura digital, interacción social, universidad.

Recibido: 20-09-2019 • Aceptado: 19-11-2019



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INTRODUCTION

Relevant problems of modern higher education are associated with a number of transformations that are a consequence of the process of total digitalization of interaction with information, which creates unprecedented opportunities and risks (Molnar G: 2015, pp. 213-217; Khazieva: 2018, pp. 347-353; ZUNIGA et al.: 2018; Booth: 2010, Kurmanali et al: 2018, Rasooli & Abedini: 2017, Khosravipour et al: 2018). In the broadest sense, digitalization can be understood as a set of technical and technological factors that relieve a person from the determinism of imperfection of knowledge organs, geographical distances, etc.

The live experience of modernity does not allow sharing the fantastic ideas about improving human memory with computer chips, raising the overall level of intellectual development with the help of the digitalization of the reflection process itself in general, what is being discussed in particular in the British TV series "The Black Mirror". However, the active development of cyber prosthetics does not allow us labeling these ideas as the naïve ones.

The perception of digital experience as a practice of negation of the whole previous tradition emerged as a social construct when in the 1980s such a direction as cyberpunk appeared. Blind following the technology became the new sense, the idea of civilization, when K. Marx's thesis from "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon" was updated: "The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living" (Marx: 1992, pp. 143-249). The era of digital history begins when digital artifacts become somewhat capable of reflecting the basic semantic milestones of human life.

2.METHODS

The works of the American researcher D. Batts, who studies various media education strategies were of conceptual significance for this paper, as well as the articles by the American theorist M. Prensky (in particular, his concepts "digital aborigines", "digital migrants", "digital wisdom") which allowed gaining understanding of the changes that a modern university must undergo (Masterman: 1996, pp. 61-75).

The authors also used the hermeneutic method in the analysis of works, devoted to the study of media education, the method of ascending from the abstract to the concrete in the description of changes in the sphere of the social formation of students. The dialectical method was used in the course of considering the contradictions inherent to the new-media culture.

3.RESULTS

En una segunda etapa del trabajo, para el grupo de competencias definidas, se aplicó el mismo cuestionario utilizado.

Indeed, in the twenty-first-century media education is becoming a peculiar trend, similar in perception to the myth of the existence of a cure for all diseases, the only way to overcome the next crisis of higher education. It should be noted that the development of media education is directly proportional to the economic development of the country. According to the researcher Toliver (Toliver: 2011, pp. 59-81), such countries as Australia, Great Britain, Canada, countries of Scandinavia, France and Switzerland are characterized by a high level of media education development. Here, the study of media is present in school programs as a mandatory module. D. Batts mentions Russia among the countries that are characterized by a small amount of public and state initiatives in the development of media education programs. Nevertheless, we believe that today, the problems of effective social interaction inside and outside the university, mediated by the deep penetration of new media in educational practices and everyday life, are relevant for all countries across the globe.

The use of social networks for educational purposes acts as a kind of advertising for the university. The extensive treatment of information makes the university attractive to applicants who choose in favor of the institution that is most active in the media space. Also, the presence of university residents in social networks creates a specific community and increases the emotional involvement of students in university life (Altbach: 2016). This creates the possibility of feedback between the administration and students/teachers, who can obtain the necessary information without formal delays. The introduction of networking (the term stems from the English noun Net and a verb to work) as a practice of creating a personal dating network, for effective resolution of educational and professional tasks using social networks as a tool for sharing experiences, leads to the fact that the teacher, placing the content on his public account, organically continues the content of his educational courses.

The need for instructing university students on how to use the modern (digital) information resources effectively should be accompanied by the formation of such personal competency as their responsible use in open communication space. In the new-media culture, the equal right of every citizen to speak and to be heard becomes a reality. However, the new forms of socialization, inherent to the digital space, immanently contain such a feature as the emergence of digital locations, i.e. limited, autonomous communication spaces, in which the modern subject realizes one's activity and finds the ways of self-expression that are comfortable for him. At the same time, he gets detached from responsibility for the reflexive, critical perception of the content that is produced in a more open, heterogeneous digital environment, where widespread social processes often accumulate.

A similar trend fixes the conscious avoidance of participation in a joint discussion of socially significant problems by a subject, which, in turn, makes it challenging to promote the values of digital citizenship. A person's access to the Internet space triggers his selective nature, allowing him to satisfy an individual cognitive request. In this situation, the personal cognitive system is configured to work with information on demand, which exacerbates individualization, immersion in digital locations, and "getting stuck" in them. As a result, reflexive abilities to check and evaluate heterogeneous, unpredictable information are blocked. In turn, this imposes serious restrictions on the formation of the joint social experience of a democratic nature and the creation of digital citizenship.

Changes experienced both by the modern individual and by society as a whole, imply a revision of the value bases of everyday life and cognitive search. In the practice of higher education, as it was noted by the American theorist F. Altbach, the influence of information technologies is combined with the process of globalization and therefore if universities try to ignore economic and social trends, they lose all their significance and find themselves at the "death line" (Davis: 2003, pp. 207-234).

The insufficient level of harmonization of digital technologies and resources with the traditional format of the organization of higher education today is combined with the changes in the field of interaction between students and teachers. Of course, the interaction between students and teachers directly in the classroom at the university or the site of the university electronic resource forum is of fundamental importance for the successful process of mastering the educational course (Mazer et al.: 2009, pp. 175-183). This type of academic interaction is perceived as an integral part of the modern educational process; however, along with this formalized aspect of the learning process, interaction occurs within social networks as well. Social networks, such as V Kontakte, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, etc. and instant messengers (messaging applications) have changed not only the educational strategy but also the academic communication landscape. Together with the connection to friends, students are connected to teachers, which, according to some researchers, can affect the mutual perception of students and teachers (Anderson: 1992, pp. 453-469).

The problem of rethinking hierarchical relations between students and teachers turned out to be at the center of a debate about maintaining the teacher's role as an intellectual development agent, and therefore, in some cases, informal interactions in social networks between the two parties to the educational process

were banned. For example, in Ireland, "Today, there are over 90,000 registered teachers in Ireland, serving education at primary, post-primary and further education levels. With almost 4,000 schools involving close to a million pupils/students, the contribution which the teaching profession makes to society is profound" (Liu: 2010, pp. 101-114). However, the more significant the academic distance between students and teachers, the more difficult it is to implement problem discussions. These problems, as some theorists rightly point out, can contribute to a decrease in motivation and interest in the educational course. This is most clearly expressed in the distance learning format (Donaldson: 2010).

It should be noted that the more actively a modern university develops as a modern educational subject capable of competing with media agents of education, the more academic content is transferred to the podcast format (from the iPod, the name of Apple's portable media players by Apple and the English verb to broadcast) video lectures, online seminars, science blogs, etc. The need to revise the academic barriers is predetermined by the development of a remote format for the provision of educational services. As the American researcher McLoughlin notes, thanks to gadgets with access to the Net, the space for joint interaction has expanded (McLoughlin: 2012).

According to Kasavin (Kasavin: 2010) social networks have the positive potential for adapting educational materials for educational purposes. Here it is necessary to note the relevance of the concept of the Soviet psychologist L.S. Vygotsky, according to which the creation of new knowledge is associated with social interaction with others. Successful learning depends on the emergence of consistency: "We construct the world not individually in our minds, but jointly in conversation, agreements, social practices" (Vygotsky: 2008). The priority task of learning becomes that the student has acquired the ability to obtain knowledge and use it, and not to "swallow the ready-made food that the teacher provides him with".

Multiculturalism and informational heterogeneity are absolute values of modern society. However, their value is often leveled, because they lead to social particularity, limit, and even undermine civil participation in the discussion, resolution of human and social problems and issues. In a globalizing society, the dangers and risks of fragmented network communication are exacerbated.

It is necessary to take into account the fact that the new (digital) format of socialization can strengthen the existing social ties, make them more productive and help to create the new ones. In this situation, it is important that the user does not lock himself on a particular social group of like-minded people and thus does not isolate himself from the generally significant social problems that constitute the matrix of public interest.

Educational conditions may help to reduce the risks of digital isolation and authorization of the subject in the network space, ensuring the evolution of digital interactions up to the state of digital citizenship.

First of all, the concept of horizontal, interactive knowledge circulation, which can act as a platform for closer and diverse connections with the public social sphere, should underlie the educational practice. A way to counter the hazards of limited use of social networks is to spread knowledge about a broad social reality that enriches students' worldview and professional experience.

The organization of the educational process should include various forms of network activity (for example, discussion on the content of blogs, news portals). This makes it possible to get acquainted with various models of social interactions, identities, ways of perceiving, and evaluating events that are contained in media discourses.

CONCLUSIONS

Digital locations, like a prison, isolate a subject from a vast, heterogeneous information environment, which he perceives as an alien, incomprehensible one, far from his immediate interests and intentions. The digital revolution, which caused fundamental transformations in the ways of working with information and

communication, and opened up new cognitive possibilities, can turn into cognitive reduction if the Internet becomes a space of predetermined, purely selective, comfortable navigation.

Encouraging and ensuring freedom in a democratic society, respect for the individual choice of a subject must coexist with public initiatives and educational measures, aimed at restricting individual activity in the selection of digital content. Individual selection of information can negatively affect the quality of social network interactions, limiting the outputs to information of public importance, containing relevant public inquiries and interests.

The unexpected and unplanned encounters with the news and materials that were not selected initially did initially not come to the attention of the subject in the course of individual selective navigation, are essential for shaping the experience of democratic practices. Such "meetings" immerse a person in the space of diverse points of view, in the field of problems and issues that contribute to the mastery of human knowledge and the formation of citizenship.

Attracting as many interested parties as possible to the educational process, using the knowledge of others through digital space, encouraging student activity for interactions, creating collaborations ultimately leads to the development of active network citizenship. Civic education in digital culture is an attempt to adopt a new technological environment for communications that open people to each other, help to discover new horizons and areas of civic participation, and realize wide social interests.

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