

International Journal of Human Sciences Research

THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN LITERACY AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: FROM THE DISRUPTION CAUSED BY THE PANDEMIC TO CONNECTION WITH THE WORLD

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Abstract: The significant changes in society in recent years, especially from a scientific and technological perspective, have led human beings to believe in their omnipotence. Several signs present in everyday life were not enough to realize that the understanding of human beings, the organization of society and Education needed urgent changes. With the emergence of the pandemic caused by the Coronavirus worldwide since 2019 and, in Brazil, intensely since March 2020, significant changes have been taking place at the societal level, from personal relationships to the systematization of educational processes. Literacy for young people and adults is part of this context. If on the one hand there was the desire to become literate and the desire to learn, on the other hand there was the difficulty of interacting with technological resources, that is, the interface between the device, computer or cell phone, and the person, be it a teacher or student. And it is this relationship that characterized the progress of the literacy process for young people and adults of the MEB Project (Base Education Movement). Thus, getting to know the actors, informing them about the importance of making use of technological resources and monitoring the teaching and learning process were the goals of the Project developed and presented here in essay form.

Keywords: education; technology; Literacy for youth and adults; pandemic

INTRODUCTION

To understand the time in which we live is inherent to the condition of humanity. Although some do it from the past or others from future perspectives, Father Antônio Vieira stated: “Time, like the world, has two hemispheres: an upper and visible one, which is the past, another lower and invisible one, which it’s the future. In the middle of both hemispheres are the horizons of time, which

are these moments of the present that we are living, where the past ends and the future begins” (History of the future, 1718). And it is in this present time, characterized by a pandemic unimaginable by postmodern society until 2020, that humanity finds itself involved in a situation of social and humanitarian chaos.

Considering that one of the characteristics of this time is the hyperconnected society and this has a strong impact on the way of living and establishing relationships, and which is driven by the market understanding of capitalism/neoliberalism, generating structural consequences that especially affect those who do not produce and have low income to consume (Sbardelotto, 2022), this reality tears apart society and generates social fractures that manifest themselves in the relationship with oneself and others (horizontal relationship), in the relationship with nature (circular relationship) and in the relationship with the transcendent (vertical relationship), according to Pope Francis, 2019.

In this context, we highlight literacy for young people and adults. In Brazil, the rates of illiterate adults and young people who have not completed basic education are still very high. Even with all the efforts made at national level, the number of people who still do not know how to read and write remains high. This way, various segments of society, articulated with volunteerism and on a popular basis, organize adult literacy projects, especially in the interior of Brazilian municipalities. One example is the Basic Education Movement (MEB).

Among the many disruptions, “breaks in the normal course of a process”, experienced by humanity, whether during the peak periods of the pandemic or in milder periods, the use of technology was the driving element to continue learning processes. There are countless reports and experiences in using

technology resources as tools, but difficulties are reported in the same proportion. The interface between the device and the educator had a significant influence, in most situations, on the teaching-learning process.

DEVELOPMENT

Youth and Adult Education (EJA) in Brazil takes us back to the history of the country itself. From the arrival of the Jesuits to the promulgation of the country's current educational legislation, such as the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (LDB), Law number: 9,394/1996 (BRASIL, 1996), a long journey was made with regard to guaranteeing the right to education for all.

However, even with indisputable advances from a normative point of view, it is enough to take a closer look at statistical information and/or observe the lives of the population, especially in areas of greater poverty, to understand the difficulty of Brazilian education systems in eradicating the illiteracy.

It is in this reality that popular education emerges, as an alternative to educational assistance for populations that did not have access to education in childhood and youth, and/or had to drop out, for various reasons. In this context, with several logics regarding the education of young people and adults, popular education is configured (GADOTTI; ROMÃO, 2011, p. 36).

Society's institutions have contributed to the attempt to reduce the social debt of education, providing access to school for the economically disadvantaged population. One of these institutions is the Basic Education Movement (MEB), founded in 1961 through Decree number: 50,370, of March 21 of the same year. This initiative is linked to the Catholic Church and has the objective of educating young people and adults by raising awareness also proposed by Paulo Freire (SAVIANI, 2021).

The objective of MEB is to leverage reading and writing based on the socio-political and economic reality of students. According to the Movement's educational proposal, the "See, Judge and Act" method provides awareness of the elements that trigger the situation in which they find themselves and seeks, in the course of literacy, to also teach literacy the ability to read reality and of participating in the change process, "awakening the affirmation of the subject with a strong aspiration for participation" (Agostini; Silveira, 2018, p. 151-152).

From this perspective, since its foundation, when it used radio to promote literacy among young people and adults, MEB has sought to include technological tools in its activities, for example in indigenous communities and territories.

"Use of technological resources (cell phone/ internet) to guide people in the community to communicate with close and distant relatives, to alleviate the problems caused by social isolation, as an exercise in affection and memory recovery when communicating with their relatives' cities of origin" (Vale, 2021, p. 64).

With the pandemic this process was accelerated. In-person classes were canceled and contact between teacher and student began via WhatsApp: voice messages, short videos, photographs, some cell phone activities, among others. The coordination held weekly meetings with teachers, via meeting, to plan together the week's activities and socialize the classes, especially the difficulties:

"Those that make it most difficult for popular education students to continue teaching and learning activities are problems with access to technological means, such as the use of the internet and digital technologies, resulting from the social inequality to which they are immersed, especially from the implementation of remote teaching" (Vieira 2021, p. 80).

It is clear that as the literacy process progressed, new needs emerged. Even though we know that digital infrastructure is precarious due to low investment by large companies and public authorities in general, we decided to use available tools, such as the Google Classroom to repository planning and collective constructions.

With the arrival of a milder period of the pandemic, after more than 40 hours of online training for teachers and coordinators, in-person classes began. How to carry out pedagogical monitoring of the 8 thousand students enrolled in the MEB PROAJA PI Project? It was necessary to systematize and record the students' learning process based on the objectives set for each month-long cycle. Thus, an application was developed in which the teacher identified the student who had not achieved the expected objectives as well as the number of absences on a monthly basis and recorded it individually. Thus, at the end of the month it was possible, through the teacher's record, local, regional and national coordination, to collect the information, present it in the form of graphic reports and, evaluating the difficulties of the classes, propose activities to the teachers to overcome them. See the link that will take you to a video with the testimony of the creator of the MEB Application, the Coordinator and one of the Teachers of the MEB PROAJA PI Project (<https://www.youtube.com/@MovimentodeEducacaodeBase-MEB/videos>).

Along this path, the impersonality of the internet and the difficulty in using technological tools in education:

“Educators position themselves differently in relation to remote classes. Some see it as a possible alternative for the present moment, others believe it is necessary to dedicate themselves to other experiences; Many people miss face-to-face classes and the little everyday things that were lost during this period” (Vieira, 2021, p. 80).

Many others, specifically the 350 teachers, 53 coordinators and 6 supervisors involved in the PROAJA PI Project, serving 47% of students aged 41 to 52, of whom currently, only 12% work, they acknowledge, in the semi-structured research carried out at the end of the Project, that the activities developed are of high relevance.

“Inevitably I learned to deal with technological tools a little more, to develop teamwork and at a distance” (Educator A).

“My suggestion is to invest even more, if possible, in the training of all professionals involved; Require basic computer knowledge, skills with spreadsheets, smartphones and others, from the professionals involved, especially if the professional scenario in the post-pandemic world is taken into consideration” (Educator B).

“Enabling the literacy process for people who, in most cases, live in conditions of social vulnerability, is highly relevant due to the richness inherent to the objective of the project, which is to offer new possibilities for reading the world” (Educator C).

This coexistence with the MEB Application and the tools offered by the Google Platform favored the awakening to the use of technological resources in the teaching-learning process. It is clear that given the desire to teach and learn, even during the pandemic, in its most intense or mild periods, there was a “disruption”. By suggesting this concept, we do not intend to exhaust it in the area of education, but based on the characteristics presented by its creator Clayton Christensen, (Harvard, 1995), we identify that it is possible to apply it in the action of teaching young people and adults to read and write.

The accessibility to technological resources, the focus on the specific audience, that is, the monitoring of student learning and the simple, easy-to-use service with data visualization, made the education of young people and

adults more meaningful.

However, the actions of the MEB, narrated here in these experiences, take us back to Paulo Freire, and with him to the “unprecedented viable”:

“The unprecedented-viable is the new, what has never happened. It is important to highlight that this concept emerges, initially linked to the idea that André Nicolai defended as “unnoticed practicable solutions” (FREIRE, 1987, p. 107). In other words, it was not just about achieving ready and immediate solutions, but about envisioning the possibility of, by acting in the world, transforming it. In these terms, viable innovation can also be related to the ideas of utopia and possible dreams” (Vieira, 2021, p. 81).

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

“Disruption” is a present element in postmodern and hyperconnected society. Experiencing it is a challenge for educators, as leaving the “comfort zone” and entering the infinity of technology requires from everyone the simplicity of children, the search of young people and the wisdom of those who believe that it is possible to give new meanings.

From the perspective of adult life, according to UNESCO, there is an increase in the availability of adults to participate in learning processes, with no time or place to learn, increasing the hope and quality of life of older people, as well as their willingness to participate in cultural activities and

social tasks. Thus, the use of technologies in education is already being incorporated into being and acting, whether by children, young people or adults. These are practical...

“... which may at first sight seem like something small, but, in the light of Freire’s references, they can be constituted as pedagogical practices of viable novelties and/or, exercises of hope.... Paulo Freire shows history and human existence as a bundle of possibilities and virtualities that can, through historical practice, be brought to fruition... Thus, in Freire’s words, the pedagogy of the unprecedented-viable mobilizes the subject to reflect on the vision of history as a possibility, and not as something fatalistic, since determined and insurmountable. Reality is conceived as something that is being and can be transformed. In other words, the unprecedented-viable tells us that there is no realm of the definitive, the ready and the finished, of certainty, of the perfect stillness of possible dreams. The unprecedented-viable is nourished by human inconclusiveness, it has no end. It is always a becoming (FREIRE, 1996) (Vieira, 2021, p. 81).

It is essential, in times of change, to encourage the use of technology, so that teaching and learning are disruptive elements in literacy, especially for young people and adults. It is the teachers, the leaders in the literacy and literacy process and the literate people who, aware of their possibilities, advance in the struggle and viability of their rights and their dreams.

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