



Using YouTube to teach reading and writing workshops

El uso de la plataforma YouTube para la enseñanza de taller de lectura y redacción

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Submitted: 05-01-2025 | Revised: 03-03-2025 | Accepted: 08-05-2025 | Published: 09-05-2025

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ABSTRACT

Teaching practice in upper secondary education, in an increasingly digital global context, cannot ignore the fact that high school students currently use cell phones and social media for many hours a day and for various purposes, and are therefore familiar with and knowledgeable about the use of these technological resources. On the other hand, the COVID-19 pandemic led to the creation of educational videos to teach the Reading and Writing Workshop course in the Advanced High School and Higher Education System (SABES) in Guanajuato, as an emerging teaching strategy in response to the need for effective remote communication with high school students. This strategy was refined in the post-pandemic period through a dedicated YouTube channel, which is now incorporated into the teaching plan for the subject. In this plan, basic content is prioritized and synthesized, topics are selected and then shared with students. The short duration of the 72 videos, no more than four minutes, is due to the limited amount of time that a teenager can maintain attention on a specific topic. During the pandemic, the videos were shared via WhatsApp and other technical and pedagogical resources used in virtual classes through the Teams platform. Currently, they are used as teaching aids in face-to-face classes. Based on this teaching experience, the objective of this work is to analyze, using the action research method, the impact of digital media on student learning at SABES.

Keywords: Upper Secondary Education; Digital Culture; Educational Videos; Reading; Writing.

RESUMEN

La práctica docente en educación media superior, en el contexto mundial, cada vez, más digital es imposible no considerar que actualmente los estudiantes de bachillerato utilizan el celular y las redes sociales muchas horas al día y para diversos propósitos, por lo que están familiarizados y tienen conocimiento sobre el manejo de estos recursos tecnológicos. Por otro lado, la pandemia por COVID-19, llevó a la elaboración de videos educativos para impartir la asignatura de Taller de Lectura y Redacción en el Sistema Avanzado de Bachillerato y Educación Superior (SABES) en Guanajuato, como estrategia didáctica emergente ante la necesidad de comunicación efectiva a distancia con los bachilleres y se perfeccionó en el periodo post pandémico mediante un canal de YouTube propio, actualmente incorporado en la planeación didáctica de la materia. En esta, se priorizan y sintetizan los contenidos básicos, se seleccionan los temas y luego se comparten con los estudiantes. La corta duración de los 72 videos, de no más de cuatro minutos, se debe al poco tiempo que, un adolescente mantiene la atención en un tema específico. Durante la pandemia, los videos fueron compartidos mediante WhatsApp y otros recursos técnico-pedagógicos utilizados en las clases virtuales mediante la plataforma Teams. Actualmente, se emplean como apoyo didáctico en las clases presenciales. En torno a esta experiencia docente el objetivo de este trabajo es analizar, desde el método de investigación acción, los impactos de los medios digitales en el aprendizaje del alumnado en el SABES.

Palabras clave: Educación Media Superior; Cultura Digital; Videos Educativos; Lectura; Redacción.

INTRODUCTION

Regarding educational lag in particular, the limited reading comprehension and writing ability among upper secondary education students, it is important to investigate in detail what the causes are and how to overcome them, since the absence of expected learning outcomes, capacities, and skills in this subject is a problem still pending attention.

Regarding this socio-educational problem situated in a context with a digital tendency, it is impossible not to consider that currently high school students use cell phones and social media for many hours a day and for various purposes, so they are familiar with and have vast skills in handling these technological resources.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a need to resort to distance education through digital platforms in order not to delay educational programs and thereby develop related teaching strategies. This was linked to the growing use by students of the internet via mobile phones and the WhatsApp application, technologies already known and widely used by the youth population.

In the face of the global health emergency, a teaching resource was the production of short videos, shared with the student group via WhatsApp, on the contents of the Reading and Writing Workshop course taught at the Sistema Avanzado de Bachillerato y Educación Superior (SABES) in the state of Guanajuato.

This emerging teaching strategy was refined in the post-pandemic period through a YouTube channel of its own called "El Profe Porfis," which is currently fully incorporated into the didactic planning of the subject. In this teaching resource, basic contents are prioritized and synthesized, topics are selected, and then shared with students.

In the design of this digital teaching-learning strategy, the profile of the recipients to whom it is addressed, the frequency, the content, and the intention of each publication were identified. Therefore, to analyze this didactic experience, the question that arises is: what are the impacts of the videos on the YouTube channel El Profe Porfis on the reading and writing learning of the SABES Guanajuato student?

To answer this question, it is assumed that the teacher cannot be considered merely a professional who applies educational techniques to solve standardized problems, because their work is a genuine effort of continuous and situated research. Thus, in teaching practice, it is not mandatory to have strictly predictable consequences; rather, it is necessary to move from individual reflection to collective reflection.⁽¹⁾

This approach to the nature of teaching leads to adopting action research, which requires the participation of people integrated into a process of inquiry and dialogue around the teaching process, as proposed by Elliot ⁽¹⁾. Based on this methodological approach, the objective of this paper is to analyze the impacts of digital media on student learning at SABES.

This proposal aims to reaffirm the relevance of reading and writing in the cognitive processes of high school students and how their skills and abilities in this subject can be strengthened with the teacher's didactic intervention by enhancing their role through action research on their teaching practice, in order to generate innovative educational strategies (now digital) to make the most of social media, as a didactic resource, and so that they are not only a means of entertainment for young people.

Educational Relevance of Reading and Writing

The subject of reading and writing is often considered a filler course in study plans and curricula, but in practice it is complex and fundamental for the academic achievement of upper secondary education students, as well as for their entry into higher education or professional performance.

In the view of García ⁽²⁾, reading comprehension must reach three levels of mastery (literal, inferential, and critical); therefore, failure to meet these can be assessed as an educational lag in this area of knowledge, capacities, and skills.

Thus, literal comprehension comprises the ability to extract complete texts, make summaries, or answer specific questions whose answer only requires a textual scan of the particular topic being sought (for example, dates or definitions). Meanwhile, inferential comprehension allows the learner to develop their own deductions from a reading, in order to express through paraphrasing the main and specific ideas. Critical comprehension, in turn, consists of the ability to interpret the message of a text; that is, it can understand ideologies, positions, values, and hidden intentions, and it is the basis for the reader's decision-making and positions.

When speaking of writing capacities and skills, lag can be understood as the absence or

unsatisfactory development of these. Also, to identify whether the writing of a text possesses the characteristics of format and content, and when the student's text does not comply with any of these, it can be recognized that there is some academic delay in the course.(2)

Likewise, the writer must clearly identify the language used, which may be connotative (personal interpretation of meanings) or denotative (textual dictionary meaning), and consider the use of technical terms and words specific to a professional or occupational sector. When writing, the learner must be aware of which textual prototypes he or she uses (narration, description, and argumentation). Finally, written texts must have a writing structure with coherent and cohesive content, with a conceptual relationship of main and specific ideas that carry a communicative intention surrounded by a context.

METHODS

In a socioeducational context, the action research method focuses on practical problems identified by the teacher upon noticing the need to deepen understanding of the difficulties in achieving teaching-learning objectives; therefore, it involves assuming the innovative role of teaching, a process that requires practical reflection, based on the methodology proposed by Elliot (1), composed of the following stages:

- The teacher undertakes an investigation of a practical problem, changing on that basis some aspect of the practice; reflection begins in action;
- The teacher modifies a strategy in response to the practical problem, and;
- Through the evaluation of the problem, strategies are modified and changed;
- A proposal for the instructional planning and assessment of the course is presented.

Paraphrasing Elliot's position (1), when practical problems arise, the priority is to act quickly to resolve them; facing a practical problem assumes a calculated risk of being wrong. There is no separation between research and practice; practice itself is the form of research, so research becomes a reflective practice.

The applied action research presented in this paper was aimed at improving teaching practice in the subject Reading and Writing Workshop, in order to improve the learning of upper secondary education students through the following process:

- Problematicization of the lag in reading and writing.
- Selection of the subject "Reading and Writing Workshop I" in the first semester of Bachillerato SABES.
- Recognition of a problematic situation: students newly entering high school have deficiencies in reading comprehension, and deficiencies in their ability to develop written work with a critical and reflective stance. Likewise, teachers have areas of opportunity in teaching practice, especially in curricular design and semester planning of the subject. Also, the psychosocial analysis of the situational context experienced by students at school and at home is important.
- Diagnosis and detection of opportunities for improvement: application of diagnostic assessments of incoming students in their capacities, skills, study habits, and learning styles to take the course Reading and Writing Workshop I, then after detecting their academic gaps, establish teaching strategies to achieve the expected learning outcomes of reading comprehension and writing. Analysis of the contents of the subject in question for the presentation of a proposal for semester planning and semester evaluation.
- Proposal: submission of proposals for semester planning, a weekly class distribution, and a student assessment system in the course of their subject during the 3 partial exams and their final average evaluation. Presentation of academic classroom activities, autonomous research work, and student self-management, complemented by academic work on social media, specifically, the creation of the educational YouTube channel "El Profe Porfis," where videos with class topics are shared as technical-pedagogical support, as an additional resource to what is proposed in the curriculum proposed by the institution.

DEVELOPMENT

Digital teaching strategy for reading and writing

Teaching strategies for high school adolescents can be focused on the use of social media;

when complemented with a digital ethnographic approach, they allow participants to develop not only writing skills but also a reflective reading comprehension of the social, cultural, and communicative contexts in which they are embedded. This comprehensive approach prepares individuals to navigate the digital world more effectively and ethically, promoting more conscious and reflective participation.

It is possible to design an innovative strategy that establishes a relationship between the study habits that are almost nonexistent among students, because the contents or the way in which they are presented to them “are boring” or are not of interest to them, with their audiovisual learning style and their social media use habits.

The results obtained in the applied surveys (3) are conclusive: the predominant learning style is audiovisual; students prefer information to be presented in videos, tutorials, banners, and infographics, mainly. The respondents have as their only academic or learning reading the textbooks provided to them in class, and the use of social networks extends throughout the day for purposes of recreation, entertainment, and contact with acquaintances and loved ones. The medium used by the vast majority to consult social networks is the cell phone.

Consequently, the use of social networks stands out as an additional didactic resource to include in teaching practice, as a means of communication for presenting curricula, academic work projects, class activities, contents, exams, and information on all types of situations of interest to the educational community.

In this context, content publication decisions must be adapted according to the social network in question since, for example, on Facebook it is possible to publish concept maps, infographics, videos, banners, among others. On networks such as TikTok, content communication is predominantly in short videos with a duration of 1 minute; in this case, the available time does considerably limit the length of the message that can be sent.

This justified the decision to create the educational YouTube channel “El Profe Porfis,” which presents information of general interest for the educational community with audiovisual strategies using video materials that have an approximate duration of 2 to 4 minutes to achieve brief but attentive concentration on the contents.

When reviewing the state of the art on upper secondary education, it stands out that students in the initial semester of high school, whose biological age is 15 to 18 years, form part of the multitasking generation (multitasking). Prensky (4) states that they have predominantly audiovisual learning styles with continuous use of social media; these are young people who use cell phones for long periods, and in general, it is possible to speak of people with a very active digital life. They are people who use social media to satisfy their needs for entertainment, communication, socialization, among others.(5)

According to Banister (6), and ratified by our own survey on digital and print reading, writing, and use of social media administered to students of the SABES Bachillerato at the San Juanico campus in the city of Celaya, Guanajuato, (3), it is confirmed that students have a predominantly audiovisual learning style with weak study habits and very short attention periods, factors that hinder the concentration necessary for the acquisition of new knowledge.

These data are of interest to support the educational innovation proposal, through digital technical-pedagogical resources, based on the use of color and the interactive movement characteristic of social networks in order to capture the students' attention and achieve learning of the expected contents of the subject in question.

It should be noted that, in both studies, it was found that, in students' use of social networks, those that predominate, in order of importance, are Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp; from this information it is inferred that a way to promote the teaching–learning process in secondary education students is through these digital communication channels. If it is further added that half of the students have used, to some extent, these 3 platforms for academic purposes, it is possible to support the relevance of using these social networks, on the part of the teacher, to meet the educational objectives of the reading and writing subjects.

In summary, the professor, in an initial situational diagnosis, detected the lack of study habits; an audiovisual learning style that predominates over the kinesthetic style; and the use of social media such as Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp by students for academic purposes.

In the analysis of reality, as part of the action research method, the implementation of educational innovations was carried out through the channel of

YouTube “El Profe Porfis” created in August 2020, and in a research study currently in progress, a dialectical analysis must be conducted to seek answers to the research questions.

Taking as a starting point the knowledge of the situational context of the students already presented, as part of the didactic planning, the groups of the subject were considered as the target

group or also known as focus group regarding the management of social media with an academic character on the YouTube channel “El Profe Porfis”.

This means of communication was chosen as a technical-pedagogical tool because it allows content to be directed to students directly through an access link to the video shared on WhatsApp, Facebook (profile Porfis Porfis), or Instagram (profile porfiriobravomoreno), which allows reaching the desired group directly, in this case the students of the subject Reading and Writing Workshop.

In YouTube video editing, it is possible to create PowerPoint presentations in video format with the expected basic contents of the course; this strategy constitutes a technical-pedagogical innovation tool in educational practice. Thus, in teaching the course, this digital strategy becomes a complement to what is covered in class or the student's autonomous research.

Regarding the duration of the videos, they were edited to a duration of 2 to 4 minutes, since these are very “heavy” videos (speaking in computing terms); in order to address this issue, sufficient and pertinent slides were selected to cover the minimum expected learning.

The playlist of 72 educational videos that have been used during the classes of the subject since 2020 and that are still current in the teaching practice carried out in the classroom is shared: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z4iZuV1CZ4w&list=PLVOYc9F79cd1cHHVLkp2VSPrCVpVj_aCA&pp=0gcJCV8EOCosWNin

CONCLUSIONS

It is very important to bear in mind that the objective of the action research method is firstly to recognize a problem in the school reality, to problematize it in socio-educational terms, to analyze it, and then to determine innovative actions that modify it.

In this sense, in the proposed educational innovation proposal, educational lag in reading and writing skills was identified as a problem among upper secondary education students; the student body's problem was described based on surveys of study habits, learning styles, and social media use, and from there the decision was made to create an own YouTube channel for educational purposes in the subject Reading and Writing at SABES Guanajuato.

Finally, it is estimated that the proposal of didactic strategies on social media integrated into face-to-face education can contribute to students being able to manage their own learning, skills, and abilities through this educational model that can be preliminarily termed didactic-hybrid.

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FUNDING

None.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

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