

Assessment of didactic materials for teaching multimodal hypertextual writing of a video game narrative

SOCIETAL PROBLEM

Digital and multimodal literacies in and out of school

- New technologies and medias come to fill the function of expression and communication tools for youth, to bring them into becoming diversified media contents producers and receivers (Lebrun, Lacelle & Boutin, 2012).
- In this new communication paradigm, to be literate means to be able to understand and create messages composed of many modes and languages simultaneously with traditional and digital supports (Lebrun et al., 2012; Lacelle, Boutin & Lebrun, 2017).
- While teens are massively exposed to a range of multimodal texts on digital and traditional supports outside of school (Jewitt, 2005; Penloup, 2017; Walsh, 2008), learning done in the classroom hardly relates to youth practices and experiences.
- Quebec school seems to ignore the purposes affiliated with digital and multimodal literacies, by disregarding the youth's digital practices and by faintly identifying digital medias' place in the curriculum.
- Miller (2007) suggests that this discrepancy might be bridged if teachers were to engage in multimodal and digital practices, especially in production activities.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Teaching digital writing with hypertext and video games' narrative

- In our master's thesis (Vallières, 2018), we elaborated and validated by experts from the field didactic materials based on two requirements:
 - the final product would be the result of digital and multimodal writing;
 - the subject of this writing would be about a digital native genre.
- To work on non-linear and multimodal texts like the **hypertext** seem to be a relevant mean to work on digital writing skills with young writers, especially due to its constraints:
 - non-linearity;
 - ideas' organization and hierarchization;
 - multiples reading paths;
 - interactivity;
 - presence of different semiotics resources.(Braaskma, Rijlaarsdam & Janssen, 2007; Bromme et Stahl, 2002; Dillon, 2002; Landow, 1997)
- Duplicating traditional textual forms in a digital environment would not be an adequate application to work on non-linear multimodal texts (Dillon, 2002).
- To work on **video games' narrative**, a digital native genre, seemed relevant for the writing task because video game constitutes an addition in complexity by:
 - its hybridity of semiotic resources;
 - its important interactivity;
 - its narrative and ludic codes.(Archibald et Gervais, 2006; Genvo, 2005; Thabet, 2011)

RESEARCH QUESTION

What are the effects of didactic materials for teaching hypertextual multimodal writing of a video game narrative on the development of necessary skills and knowledge of digital writing for teenagers?

METHOD

Research and development approach

- Our study adheres to the research and development approach (Harvey & Loisel, 2009), a type of research that aims to develop useful alternatives, in the form of interventions, tools and design, material or conceptual, to act on a given situation.
- We will experiment the didactic materials that we created and validated in our Master's thesis (Vallières, 2018), more specifically in implementing it in a didactic sequence in a secondary level classroom.

Didactic materials

- The didactic materials that we elaborated contains:
 - an explanation of the educational context;
 - a description of **skills** and **procedural knowledge** to develop during the writing project;
 - a **summary grid** identifying in a comprehensive manner the knowledge, related to narratology, hypertexts and video games, to develop and to mobilise while writing a multimodal hypertext;
 - a description of the **activities**;
 - an exhaustive **prototype** of the product of a hypertextual multimodal writing task, made with **Twine** and used as an example for the activities and to present the extend of the various knowledge to develop.

Data collection

- The epistemological posture will be interpretative and oriented towards a qualitative approach.
- The tools we will develop for our doctoral project are the following:
 - a logbook for the researcher;
 - a notebook of the writing done in class for every student;
 - the digital production (multimodal hypertexts) done by the students;
 - an observation table for the productions;
 - a survey at the beginning and one at the end of the experimentation for the students and the teacher.

EXPECTED RESULTS

- Proposing to teachers of the secondary education field a new and proven resource for teaching digital writing and multimodal texts.
- Pursuing the development of digital writing skills and processes, especially hypertextual and multimodal.
- Offering an awareness towards new textual forms as video games and hypertexts.