MEDIA LITERACY THROUGH THE LENS OF DIGITAL HUMANITIES: A TRANSDISCIPLINARY STUDY

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Abstract:

This study supports the idea that education has to cope with a constantly changing world and the importance of developing digital and media skills among students to enable them to critically and responsibly navigate the current media environment. Accordingly, the present study aims to analyze the influence of digital humanities on media literacy and to answer the question, "To what extent does the didactic integration of digital humanities influence media literacy skills? To answer this question, the approach of action research is adopted in this qualitative study which is based on observing two primary classrooms in Morocco. In the first classroom, the teacher has implemented digital tools as didactic supports. In the second classroom, the teacher has received specific training on the socio-educational integration of digital humanities as part of implementing a previous study on digital humanities. The results show that the didactic integration of digital humanities in language classroom can positively affect media literacy skill acquisition. Moreover, to demonstrate this impact, a framework is developed in order to define a modal for integrating digital humanities to help acquire media literacy skills. Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of a reflective and integrated approach to the digital humanities in teaching to enhance media literacy and intercultural education.

Key Words: Digital Humanities, Media Literacy, Skills, Teaching.

Introduction:

Media literacy has become an essential skill in 21st century digital society. The rise of socialmedia and digital technologies has made creating and disseminating information more accessiblethan ever. However, understanding the media and distinguishing distorted information from thetruth has become increasingly complex. Integrating digital humanities into media literacy can open new pathways to teach media skills and to prepare students to be more responsible digital citizens. Hence, the present study analyzes the influence of the didactic integration of digital humanities on media literacy in language classroom contexts. Furthermore, we have compared two primary school classrooms. In the first one, the teacher uses digital humanities' tools to teach media skills and in the second the teacher adopts traditional teaching methods. These observation sessions have focused on assessing students' commitment, motivation, understanding, and critical thinking about media. In this perspective, this article investigates the impact of digital humanities' tools on students' understanding of media and media literacy and the extent to which digital humanities can improve students' commitment and motivation in learning media skills. Accordingly, this study aims at providing concrete results to help teachers effectively integrate digital humanities into media literacy starting from two formulated hypothesis:

1. Using digital humanities' tools in media literacy could increase students' understanding and critical thinking about media by offering a variety of resources to explore media and information sources.

2. Using digital humanities' tools in media literacy could improve students' commitment and motivation through more interactive learning and by providing engaging content creation tools.

Within this context of study, many researches have paved the ground to media literacy skill acquisition. Mayer (2009) on the multimedia learning theory implies that using digital humanities' tools in media education have increase students' understanding and critical thinking of media. Digital humanities' tools help organize information and foster awareness of media-related concepts by providing various resources to explore media and information sources. Moreover, the theory of motivation and commitment in education (Fredricks & Paris, 2004) points that using digital humanities' tools in media literacy can improve students' commitment and motivation because digital humanities' tools provide a more interactive, engaging, and rich learning experiences encouraging hence students' motivation and commitment.

This is achieved through cross-cultural activity to understand how media skills can be taught effectively and appropriately. To address this goal, we have established the following targets:

• Assess the influence of digital humanities integration in media literacy on student involvement and motivation.

• Investigate how integrating digital humanities can help teach media literacy effectively and

innovatively.

• Compare the effectiveness of traditional and digital humanities integration-based teaching in media literacy.

• Assess students' understanding and critical reflection of media in the context of a cross-cultural activity.

• Explore media literacy's potential to promote mutual understanding and intercultural communication in our diverse society.

• Provide concrete outcomes to support teachers in integrating digital humanities effectively into media education.

• Contribute to the discussion on the relevance of media literacy in our ever-changing digital society and possible ways to prepare students for becoming responsible digital citizens.

2. Literature Review

Media literacy and digital humanities have been evolving to become increasingly prominent research fields in recent years. Livingstone and Helsper (2008) have stated that media literacy is accessing, assessing and creating digital messages in varied contexts. Consequently, teaching these skills is crucial to enable learners to be more responsible and critical digital citizens (Buckingham, 2019). Digital humanities have emerged as an interdisciplinary field of study that investigates the potential of digital technologies in the pursuit, analysis and communication of knowledge in social sciences and humanities (Klein & Duff, 2017). Thus, combining traditional humanities' skills with technical skills, digital humanities offer new approaches to teaching and learning media skills (Terras & Nyhan, 2016). Several studies have already explored the impact of integrating digital humanities into media literacy. For instance, Brittain and Glowacki (2016) have explored data analysis tools in political communication education. Also, Rodriguez and Barbas (2018) have investigated the use of social networks in teaching communication in language classrooms. These studies have shown that integrating digital humanities can provide new approaches to teaching media skills and fostering students' involvement and participation.

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants in the study

This study is based on the observation of two classrooms in a Moroccan primary school in Sous Massa region in the Agadir community. The first classroom sample consisted of 11 boys and 11 girls, both are about 11 years old. In comparison, the sample of the control classroom is consisted of 10 boys and 12 girls, both aged approximately 10 years.

3.2 Material and Approach

This study adopts an action research approach though classroom observation sessions in a Moroccan primary school. It's a qualitative study that seeks to assess the influence of integrating digital humanities into media literacy within a language classroom context. Thus, data is collected using participant observation, a qualitative research method that have allowed us to understand their experiences and behaviors. Observations are conducted in six class sessions for each group totaling twelve class sessions, 40 minutes each. To analyze the data, we have dealt with content analysis, a qualitative analysis method that extracts themes and categories from textual data (Krippendorff, 2013). Results are presented as a comparison between the two groups, using descriptive statistics to describe the data. Participants have been informed about the research and have signed a consent form before participating.

4. Results

The study's findings are presented in session description, allowing for a thorough understanding of the impact of digital humanities integration in the classroom on students' development of media and digital skills.

Session 1: Introduction to Inter-culturality and the Media

Classroom 1: Presentation of key concepts of inter-culturality and media by the teacherSmall group discussion of the meaning of the terms

Use of digital tools to create mind-maps and word clouds

As part of this session, the teacher recommended several tools. The following is a list of thesetools with a brief description of each tool:

- Google Maps: To explore geolocation and local media mapping.

- Google News: To analyze news sources in traditional media.

- FactCheck.org: to check facts and information from news sources.

- Infogram: to create infographics for data visualization.

- Canva: to create graphics and designs for media content.

- Scratch: A visual programming tool that enables students to create interactive stories,animations, and games.

- Voyant Tools: a tool for text analysis that enables users to visualize trends, frequencies,and correlations in a text body.

- Omeka: a content management system for creating and publishing digital collections,virtual libraries, and online exhibitions.

- Gephi: a network visualization software that can graphically represent relationships between different elements, such as words, people, institutions, or concepts.

• OpenRefine: for data cleanup and analysis, which allows manipulation and transformation of data of different formats to become more exploitable.

• Ant Conc allows students to visualize word frequencies, identify collocations, and perform concordance analysis.

The teacher has also explained how to use each tool and displayed examples of each tool in action. Students work in small groups exploring these tools and are sometimes guided by their teacher.

Classroom 2: Presentation of key concepts of interculturality and media by the teacher

Discussion in small groups on the meaning of the terms

Text reading and lecture listening to deepen comprehension.

Session 2: Exploring Information Sources

• Classroom 1: Students use digital tools to investigate and evaluate online information sources. They use graphs to depict the results of their research and share their experience with the classroom.

• Classroom 2: Students review articles and book passages to learn how to evaluate information sources. They discuss and make notes on identifying reliable sources of information.

Session 3: Analysis of media coverage of interculturality

•Classroom 1: Students analyze media coverage of interculturality through traditional media and social networks. They create graphs representing their findings and present their analysis to the class.

• Classroom 2: Students study examples of media coverage of interculturality in traditional media and social networks. They focus on media bias and stereotypes and share their understanding with the class.

Session 4: Media Content Production

Class 1: Students produce media content to communicate their understanding of interculturality and media coverage. They use digital tools such as infographics and videos.

Class 2: Students write an essay on interculturality and discuss their understanding in class.

Session 5: Analysis of Media Content Receptivity

• Classroom 1: Students explore the audience's reception of their media content online. They review comments and feedback on social media and discuss how they can improve their communication in the future.

• Classroom2: Students present their essays in class and get feedback from their classmates.

- **Session 6: Debriefing the Activity**

  - Classroom 1: The teacher asks students to reflect on their learning experience and provide feedback on the assigned activities. Students share their experiences and discuss what they have learnt using a Scratch presentation.

  - Classroom 2: The teacher asks students to reflect on their learning experience and gets feedback on the provided activities. Students share their experiences and discuss what they have learnt.

The results show that digital humanities tools in media literacy can significantly impact students' involvement, motivation, understanding, and critical thinking about media. Thus, teachers can use digital tools to create activities.

4.1 Tools used by the teachers:

As demonstrated in the table below, the teacher of classroom 1 relies on digital tools, such as computer-assisted layouts, online research, and creation tools to teach media literacy. On the other hand, the teacher in classroom 2 uses traditional tools such as books, encyclopedias, and traditional drawing tools.

The study findings reveal that both teachers are similarly successful in developing intercultural skills among their students, regardless of the different tools they have used in their teaching. However, it is worth noting that only the students in the first class have showed significant improvement in their media and digital skills. This difference is attributed to using digital humanities tools in the first class, enabling students to develop more advanced media content creation and communication skills.

Table 1: Tools used by the teachers of the two classrooms (1 and 2)

Used tool	Clasroom 1 Integrating digital humanities	Clasroom 2 Using traditional methods
Session 1 - Introduction	Computer-assisted presentation, online group discussions	Classroom discussion
Session 2 - Exploring information sources	Online research tools, websites, source reliability tools	Library research tools, books, encyclopedias
Session 3 - Analyzing Media Coverage of Interculturality	Social networks, online search engines	Traditional media such as television and newspapers
Session 4 - Producing media content	Online creative tools such as infographics and videos	Paper and pencils, traditional drawing tools
Session 5 - Analyzing	Social networks, online comments	Group discussion in the classroom
Session 6 - Activity review	Online surveys, online reviews	Group discussion in the classroom

4.2 Tools used by students:

The table below compares the tools used by students in the two classes.

Table 2: **Tools used by the students of both classes.**

Tools used	Classroom integrating digital humanities	Classroom with traditionaltools
Infographics	Used	Not used
Videos	Used	Not used
Social networks	Used	Not used
Presentation software	Used	Used
Websites	Used	Used
Books	Rarely used	Used
Printed newspapers	Rarely used	Used
Radio and television programs	Rarely used	Used
Text analysis software	Used	Not used

Students in the academic classroom where digital humanities are implemented regularly use digital tools, including infographics, videos, and social networks, to create and share their media content. Comparatively, in the classroom with traditional tools, students primarily use presentation software, websites, and print sources of information such as books, newspapers and radio and television shows.

4.3 Interpretation of the results:

The results of this study demonstrate that the didactic integration of digital humanities in media education can significantly impact students' involvement and motivation along with their understanding and critical thinking about media in a cross-cultural context. These findings are consistent with the work of Hargittai (2010) and Jenkins (2006), who stress the importance of engaging digital technologies in education to develop digital and media literacy in youth.

Students in the first classroom demonstrate a higher ability to use various information sources to fully understand cross-cultural events, including traditional media and social networks. Moreover, they are able to check the authenticity of information sources. Students also show greater creativity in presenting their findings, using digital humanities tools such as data visualizations and infographics, to report their media coverage analyses. These findings suggest that integrating digital humanities into media literacy can help develop students' digital and media literacy skills enabling them to better

understand and analyze media in a cross- cultural context.

Nevertheless, in the second classroom, students show limited understanding of media coverage and cannot recognize media bias and use traditional methods such as reading texts and listening to lectures in order to acquire media skills. These results are consistent with Livingstone's (2004) work highlighting the limitations of traditional approaches to media literacy.

These results show that teachers can consider integrating digital humanities' tools into their media literacy teaching to improve student commitment and motivation. Additionally, this prompts theirnderstanding and critical thinking of media in a cross-cultural context. The results also stress the key role of the teacher in effectively integrating digital humanities into media literacy by creating a collaborative learning environment and guiding students in using digital tools.

Additionally, it can be admitted that this study is constrained by its sample size and a limited geographic scope. Future research can include more classes and broader cultural contexts to investigate the effectiveness of integrating digital humanities into media literacy in broader cross-cultural contexts.

4.4 Validation of Hypotheses:

Hypotheses validation involve a comparative study conducted across two primary school classrooms. The study results confirm the hypothesis that digital humanities' tools in media education improve students' understanding and critical thinking about media. Students in the class which have benefited from digital humanities' tools have demonstrated greater creativity in presenting their findings and have developed more advanced digital skills such as graphing and data visualization. However, students in the classroom where digital humanities are not integrated show a limited understanding of media and media bias as they rely on traditional methods to communicate their findings.

As for the hypothesis stating that the use of digital humanities tools in media literacy affects student commitment and motivation, the findings also confirmed this hypothesis. Indeed, students in the classroom that used digital humanities tools were more involved and motivated during their learning activities, which was observed in their lively participation in class debates and their interest in using different sources of information. Meanwhile, students in the class that did not use digital humanities showed lower commitment and motivation.

Overall, these results confirm the importance of the didactic integration of digital humanities in media literacy to improve students' understanding, critical thinking, commitment, andmotivation.

4.5 Recommendations:

Based on the findings, the following recommendations can be suggested as practical activities forteachers who wish to integrate the digital humanities into media education:

– Use content analysis tools: Teachers can use tools like TagCrowd or Wordle to help students identify key topics and messages in news articles. These tools can help students understand how the media presents cross-cultural events and how they can interpret these presentations.

– Use geolocation: Teachers can use geolocation tools, such as Google Maps, to guide students in understanding the geographic scope of the cross-cultural event. In addition, students can use these tools to examine how different media outlets cover the event in different regions of the world.

– Use data visualizations: Teachers can coach students to create data visualizations such as graphs or infographics to report their analyses of the media coverage of the cross-cultural event. These visualizations help students share their ideas clearly and more effectively.

– Teach fact-checking skills: Teachers can help students develop them by training them to use tools such as Google Fact Check or Snopes. Students can also be encouraged to check the authenticity of news sources and discuss the importance of fact-checking in an ever-changing media world.

– Using Social Networks: Teachers can support their students in understanding the uses of social networks to cover cross-cultural events and the potential of social networks to spread misinformation. Students can also be encouraged to create social media content to discuss the intercultural event and share their analysis.

– Encourage critical thinking: Teachers can encourage students to think critically about media coverage of intercultural events. Students can be challenged to discuss how the media can influence their understanding of the event and how they can use their critical thinking to interpret the given information.

5. Conclusion

The didactic integration of digital humanities can significantly affect the development of media and digital skills in students. The activities suggested in this framework show that digital tools can stimulate students' commitment and motivation while improving their understanding and critical thinking of media. Nevertheless, exploring further and developing innovative pedagogical approaches to optimize the benefits of digital humanities in media literacy and broader learning is essential.

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