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Organizers and partners



K.04. Leadership and active student participation: democratic citizenship, well-being and inclusion in the secondary school

Producing Media in Classrooms to Struggle Digital Educational Poverty: a Research in Lower Secondary Schools

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digital divide, digital educational poverty, digital literacy, media making, onlife citizenship

Since 2021, the Research Center on Media, Innovation and Technology Education (Cremit) of the Catholic University has proposed using the new construct of “digital educational poverty” (Pasta, Marangi, Rivoltella, 2021) to update and broaden the concept of “digital divide”. The phenomenon is therefore not only understood as the deprivation of devices and access to the Internet, but also refers to the failure to acquire digital skills, understood as new alphabets (Rivoltella, 2020) necessary in the postmedia society to analyze the production and use of different digital content by the “viewers” of the social Web (Pasta, 2021). In this perspective, the ability to design, create and disseminate media content and formats is central.

This strategy is the basis of the Digital Connections project (2021-2024), created by Save the Children together with the Cremit and Edi Onlus. The project, which involved 99 schools, over 6,000 students and 400 teachers, developed the fight against digital educational poverty in the civic education curriculum of the second and third year of lower secondary school, through the activation of 7 participatory newsrooms in the classrooms: two for digital writing, to create entries for Wikipedia and online petitions; two for the production of podcasts, to create a report and a review; two for the construction of digital storytelling, both video and visual and one for the development of social marketing strategies, aimed at disseminating online content to promote digital wisdom among peers. In the first part of the contribution, the theoretical and methodological framework will be provided that has oriented the design and production of digital formats according to the logic of cultural convergence (Jenkins, 2006), digital plenitude (Bolter, 2020), multimodal semantics (Kress, 2010) and Peer&Media Education (Ottolini, Rivoltella, 2014; Rivoltella, 2021), in a logic of cross-media protagonism (Marangi, 2021).

In the second part of the contribution, the data referring to a selected sample of 100 products created in the classes will be presented, analyzed with the PRODACT (PROmote Digital Analysis and Competences in Transmedia) tool, created by the authors to evaluate the products according to different parameters.

The artefacts were analyzed using the indicators of the aesthetic, critical and ethical dimensions of digital competence, typical of New Literacy (Rivoltella, 2020) together with the references of DigComp 2.2 and the four areas of Digital Educational Poverty, in an integrated perspective which takes as background the concept of “Onlife Citizenship” (Pasta, Rivoltella, 2022)

The analysis shows that this type of productive practices not only implement digital skills in students, but also develop teaching and educational practices that combine formal and informal skills and facilitate participation and protagonism, even in complex or problematic socio-cultural contexts, according to the logic of third-party learning (Potter, McDougall, 2017) and in a perspective of digital citizenship that allows us to develop updated and expendable educational media skills (Buckingham, 2020) and to develop the ethical sense necessary to consciously inhabit the mediapolis (Silverstone, 2006).