

IMAGINE, CREATE AND CONSTRUCT KNOWLEDGE

Mónica García Pelayo

Universidad Pedagógica Nacional-México

There exists an inherent quality in the human being, the imaginary capacity, which is inextricably articulated to creative potential, to the construction of meanings.

Castoriadis points out that the human being possesses "...an enormous amount of creative imaginary that attempts, and achieves investing the world with meaning" (2004: 42). He likewise affirms that "We always speak of imagination as a capacity to see what is not there; to put what is simply not there, or to put into something that which is not there" (2004: 84).

However, school daily and repeatedly not only refrains from fostering this ability but even excludes and represses it, insofar as schooling considers imagining to be an obstacle to learning.

In antithesis to such a position, the work presented here is grounded in the centrality of deliberate use of imagination in the creation and production of digital fictional narratives for the construction of knowledge. It results from action research being carried out at the Mexico City's National University of Education Sciences (UPN) in the bachelor's programs of Pedagogy and Educational Psychology.

Why use imagination to create a fictional narrative based on the educational contents of the subjects? Because, as Bruner explained, "...narration is one of the most frequent and powerful forms of discourse in human communication" (2009: 90).

A minimal condition for creating a narrative derived from educational content is the incorporation of emotions and feelings, which are woven or interlocked via exercise of creative imagination. Inventing a narrative requires that students imagine different

situations, actions, locations, characters and multiple options or alternatives of their storyline relative the educational content tasked. This implies that students deliberately incorporate their feelings, emotions, desires, fears and torments, since these are what make up the raw material to give life to their narrative.

Imagination and creation are two capacities indispensable to the construction of knowledge, given that, to truly learn something beyond the cognitive activity, it is necessary for a learner to represent the content in a singular manner, subjectively, and to make it personal. This is why the learning technique presented here not only works with the imagination to create a narration or written storyline, but also takes it onto the stage, which is to say that it is realized in student acting and recorded on a mobile telephone, by which means the material may take on an external presence and be exhibited countless times.

Bruner sustains that: "...narration deals with the warp and weft of human action and intentionality. It mediates between the canonical world of culture and the more idiosyncratic world of beliefs, desires and hopes. It makes the exceptional comprehensible, and may even teach, preserve memories or even alter the past" (2009: 68).

He also holds that cultural media exist which can favour knowledge construction, which is basis on which I sustain that concretizing creative imagination in a digital narrative, whether photographic sequence, video or audio recording, is a teaching strategy that potentialises a new manner of constructing knowledge derivative of a world vision that interweaves the affective and the rational.

The collective creation or narration proposed is based on collaborative work where a negotiation of meaning takes place both singularly and collectively.

The steps to create a narrative are:

Step 1

Constitute the work team. It should preferably have four to eight members.

Step 2

Select from the total of all the teacher's or student's course contents the content to be modified or converted into narrative.

Step 3

Imagine all the diverse ways that could happen in the story: anecdotes, situations, persons, epochs, locations, and so forth.

Step 4

Give life to the characters by imagining their features:

- Physical: appearance, build, height, etc.
- Psychological: personality, way of thinking and behaving, etc.
- Sociological: social class, schooling, occupation, etc.
- Gender
- Age

Step 5

Share your proposals, first in a brainstorm that establishes the dialogue upon the diverse individual options each member has imagined. On the foundation of the sound ideas from the discussion and negotiation, go on to build the narration collectively with the other team members.

Step 6

Invent or give life to the narrative by drawing a situation which will generate a later conflict. To do so, make use of your full and free imagination, do not stick to proposing elements and events from reality, imagine fantastic situations, contemplate places and objects with magical attributes that are capable of generating what you desire.

Step 7

It is fundamental that your narrative include CONFLICT as an indispensable element to generating interest among the spectators or audience. Without a conflict the narrative would be no more than a simple, boring concatenation of events. Bruner indicates that: "...for a drama to exist something unexpected must occur" (2003: 31).

Step 8

Note down each event or incident which happens to the character or characters in the narrative in such a way that the conflict becomes evident and the conclusion of the story will derive from it. This part does not necessarily close out the possibility of the story being open-ended, allowing the spectators to imagine the anti-climax. Two or more endings may even be traced, whatever you find pertinent.

Step 9

Once you have finished your preliminary narrative, evaluate with your teammates the plot, the conflict, its possible resolution or further complication.

Step 10

If possible, it is recommendable to let the narrative *rest* of a day or several days to reflect on the plot and make pertinent modifications. If we still find the story pleasing and we do not judge any large scale modifications necessary, then we can move on to the task of *dress the story up*. This means locating it, naming it if we wish, and giving the characters personalities by imagining how each of them speaks, what attributes identify them, etc.

Step 11

Emotions, affect, should be the indispensable element, to which end we must accomplish that our narrative impacts through the various human feelings: sadness, hate, love, and so on without leaving humour aside, being a most important ingredient.

Step 12

Once the plot that will make up the narrative is finished, a script will be written that specifies and describes the events that builds its framework, the scenes or locations, the characters and their dialogues.

Step 13

The option can be taken for digital production: in video, audio or photo sequence.

Based on the work done by students, the following affirmations may be made.

By creating and producing narratives, students:

- Construct knowledge by giving meaning to the educational content by searching, creating and articulating significations to invent a fictional narrative.
- Potentiate their imagination and communicative skills by making use of their imaginary capacity to produce a storyline that gives meaning to the educational content.
- Concretize reality from their own perspective in which imagination, emotions and feelings are the raw material and subjectivity ceases to be a stigma: to celebrates their existence.
- Starting with imaginary capacity, create and recreate meanings derived from the educational contents.
- Generate a memory trace by virtue of involving affect and emotions. All that multiplied by the impact of imprinting their creative imagination in a digital narrative that transcends uniqueness because it can be reproduced countless times.

- Work out of play: in a learning strategy where pleasure and learning intersect rather than being counterpoised.
- Generate subjective worlds where reality and fiction intertwine to build a narrative drama that ties affectivity to cognition.
- Transit from monologue and unidirectionality to dialogue and the exercise of self-communication.
- From producing of the teacher they cross over to producing for the group and themselves. Knowledge built now permeates the classroom and disseminates via social networks.
- Manage their own learning, that is, become their own teachers of themselves and their classmates.
- Generate new shared significations resulting from the creation and negotiation of meanings in the university classroom.

The research results demonstrate that through the experience of imagining, creating and producing digital fictional narratives students:

- Make a fundamental discovery: their imaginary capacity. They are surprised to realize they are imaginative, creative.
- Uncover or discover that a way to learning is play.
- Learn that in the exercise of freedom of possible worlds which they not only imagine and organize in a narrative structure or through a storyline, but is also performed, represented and fixed in a digital production shown to the group and can be exhibited infinite times.

- Exercise learning through action, transformation, which permits appropriation of knowledge where cognition is in a tight relationship to emotions, feelings, that generates a memory trace.
- Take on an active role, transforming their object of knowledge and, in that act, transform themselves.
- Learn via imagination, through their bodies, their emotions.
- Potentiate their creative imagination.

FINAL REFLECTIONS

Taking as a starting point the experience of creating digital fictional narratives, the need becomes evident for a new role for the teacher to foster and promote the exercise of creative imagination, a role that centres on being the student's guide, a facilitator of learning.

The teacher must be open to an infinity of ideas and possible worlds, to finding oneself before a wide variety of digital narratives produced from the individual and collective imagination of the student work team.

Creation of narratives is eminently experiential learning because learning that is predicated on bringing into practice what is imagined and reflecting on what is made. It involves a process of thought-imagination-action-reflection that is aware of the manner in which students generate representations.

It must be pointed up that imagining and creating within the learning process may be enriched with the use of technologies to produce materials that give life and social presence to our imagination.

I hold that this learning cycle for creating fictional digital narratives positions the imagination in the preponderant place it deserves in the construction of knowledge. This application restores the efficiency narrative has had throughout history, while combining it with technology university youth use on a daily basis.

By the same token, by means of employing their imaginary capacity, students thread the contents, events, the sequences, first in the unique drama and later in the collective drama

of the fictional narrative where the emotional and the cognitive are indissolubly linked to generate a new manner of building knowledge.

Finally it is important to point out that the creation of digital narratives of de fiction is a process that sets out from the individual's singular imagination. By socializing it and through teamwork it transforms into a product of collective imagination. This process which begins internally, is later externalized. From the starting point of production with a mobile telephone it grows into a digital narrative, which is an external cultural representation. This external cultural representation will generate new internal significations and restructurings of the content dealt with.

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