

## APPLICATIONS OF THE TEACHING FILM IN ACADEMIC LEARNING, FOR PRACTICAL SKILLS TRAINING

CORNELIA STAN\*

**ABSTRACT.** The modern teacher achieves his goals with the support of many ways of learning, ever newer and more sophisticated (multimedia support, online transmission techniques, teaching materials based on new information and communication technologies). Thus, current educational programs focus on developing management skills of experiential learning and the formation of cognitive structures that emphasize the need for procedural knowledge acquisition through flexible transmission techniques that highlight information in training at any level.

**Keywords:** *information and communication media, teaching film, experiential learning.*

**ZUSAMMENFASSUNG.** Ein moderner Lehrer realisiert den Unterricht mit der Unterstützung von vielen Lernmitteln, die immer neuer und komplexer werden (Medien Unterstützung, Online-Übertragung Techniken, Unterrichtsmaterialien zu neuen Informations-und Kommunikationstechnologien). Aktuelle pädagogische Programme, fokussieren sich also, auf die Entwicklung von Managementfähigkeiten im Lernen und auf der Bildung von kognitiven Strukturen, die die Notwendigkeit von Erworben des prozeduralen Wissen durch Techniken, die flexible Übermittlung von Informationen in der Ausbildung auf allen Ebenen betonen, unterstreichen.

**Schlüsselwörter:** *Informations-und Kommunikationsmittel, didaktischer Film, Lernen durch Erlebnisse*

### Introduction

Training based on information and communication means brings together elements specific to the behaviorist, cognitivist and constructivist theories. Efficiency analysis of the new information technologies in education is based on indicators targeting their formative value: access to multiple perspectives

---

\* Ph.D., Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences, Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, corneliassv@yahoo.com

on knowledge, the authenticity of the presented teaching context, using critical analysis and reflection in studies, conscious and responsible reference of those educated to the teaching situation, the possibility of evaluation/self-evaluation of the degree of accuracy manifested in solving tasks etc. The last mentioned aspect is already referring to psycho-pedagogical valences of training based on new informational technologies not just in teaching but also in evaluation, exploiting technology in all school functions.

### **Integration of information and communication means in the process of academic learning**

Integration and use of information and communication education is justified by the fact that they meet the requirements of teaching principles that ensure optimal functionality of the educational process for all levels of education.

Thus, a more complex topic or issue that brings many innovative elements must be accompanied by audio-visual elements that allow optimal comprehension and retention. In addition, viewing and listening to sequences that help make learning more enjoyable transferring knowledge, more exciting for students, encouraging critical thinking and learning practical experience skills useful in real life.

It is also known that disciplines aimed practical skills training require connections with theoretical acquisitions, aspect which can be used in training by conducting applied and theoretical syntheses and an interdisciplinary approach to issues taught, with formative effects on the group of students (Jinga, I. Negret, I. 1994).

Modern, technical means of training contribute to learning according to Kolb's experiential learning model (1984), perceived as an integrative, holistic perspective on learning, bringing together experience, perception, cognition and behavior. Basically, learning goes through certain sequences that form a circuit, based on concrete experience with the learning element, continuing with a reflective observation of its particularities, thus favoring content conceptualization and ending with active experimentation. After this final stage, the circuit can recover starting from a higher level of practical experiences the student may have, in this way building a pyramid of theoretical and practical acquisitions.

Through observation and analysis, through active and critical reference to experience, a person can create their own style of action, according to their cognitive and behavioral characteristics.

Means of information and communication education have the advantage of facilitating the expression of immediate feedback as the basis for learning, establishing connections between observation, reflection and action.

### **Applications of educational film in carrying out pedagogical practice in the academic education system**

**The film** is an excellent means of communication and information with multiple instructive and educational valences, associating the tools of scientific investigation. The film can be easily integrated into various sequences of educational activities, serving to provide information and engage students in the learning process.

Analyzing the features of this educational tool, we can illustrate some of the benefits of its use in teaching at any level:

- mediates the observation and understanding of phenomena inaccessible or difficult to access by a direct perception;
- causes and develops motivation to learn by addressing problems in an traditional alternative manner;
- transmits not only impersonal information, but may facilitate subtle illustration of ideas, emotions, human thoughts;
- allows relations between assimilated knowledge and new experiences, as well as using this data;
- stimulates reflection and introspection.

The idea of using this information means in practical training of students at the primary and preschool pedagogical specialization started from an experience in preuniversity school education. Several years ago, in collaboration with teachers from the United Kingdom, we have developed a program aimed at preparing students from post-secondary education levels, in the specialization of educator-child careers. Basically, this specialization skills training aimed at assisting and educating children in placement centers, complementing the educational activities conducted in schools.

Since the problem of these children was at that time (1995) rather discussed and various ways were tested to improve their living conditions and education, direct access to placement institutions was difficult to achieve, and access to information was frequently difficult. Practice in these institutions was mandatory, but in the presence of students, many of the current issues of these activities in the institutions were hidden.

For this reason, we began to form a theoretical and a practical basis for the students, using video recordings, both abroad and from our country, establishing a comparison and causing enlargement context of student information.

Integration of educational film in lessons was done with discernment and associated with teaching strategies aimed at developing skills to act professionally in relation to children and employees of placement shelters. Experience provided by teachers from Great Britain by offering models of good practice in these institutions was an extra source of information and inspiration for the new generation preparing to work in this field.

The emphasis on action-problem formulation of questions that students will need to find an answer to during or after the projection and establishing learning tasks related to the contents projection were focused methodology for conducting activities information with the film.

The main problems illustrated were associated with knowledge already acquired by the students, but also with the practical experience they had at the time, stimulating their critical analysis and reflection.

An item that was counted on in learning was the emotional contents of messages conveyed by the projection, knowing that emotional states triggered by certain sequences of projection can be beneficial for the acquisition of life experiences.

Capitalization of educational content of the projected movies aimed at the integration of new data in cognitive experiences of the students, but also at triggering reactions or against aspects analyzed.

As relatively immediate effects associated with the use of the film, real records or simulations, we found the students develop a critical spirit, often leading to heated discussions and moments of tension, but with an enhancer role, stimulating learning. We could see the fact that students came with various innovative ideas designed to change the current situation at that time in placement centers, largely encouraging the conduct of voluntary actions carried out with disadvantaged children, something somewhat new at that moment in our country.

Basically, the students developed a sense of responsibility for their own learning, engaging where possible, in anything that was related to preparation for exerting certain professions, including people, especially children, who manifested a degree of difficulty in social adjustment.

Moreover, most of those trained through the education program, currently work in placement centers or in special schools for children with disabilities or in various NGOs, for people with various difficulties.

Specific educational programs of the last few years were marked by a paradigm shift in information technology, so it became much easier to integrate various technical means in the educational process, resorting to various softwares that support interactivity, collaborative and cooperative teaching as well as development of cognition and meta-cognition.

In this context, based on awareness of the positive impact they have had in the experience described above, the educational film, through various real or simulated records we wanted to recreate that educational setting with students pursuing teaching practice in kindergartens and primary schools preparing for a teaching career.

Unfortunately, current conditions in our country do not favor a contractual collaboration with educational institutions to support multiple contexts of

students' learning situations. If abroad, access to online images of classes of students and groups of children are possible at any time, with the purpose of witnessing the act of teaching, we can only use records of such activities. Even so there is a degree of reluctance to use such recordings as teaching material for analysis, out of concern not to have committed errors, which, in fact, would be instances of reflection and correction.

In this situation we used own materials recorded on several occasions, in two categories: real situations that give classroom activities (most previously prepared and carefully conducted), and recordings of simulated activities where erroneous actions were intentionally inserted that had to be identified and corrected by the students, in agreement with theoretical knowledge and practical experience already available.

Both types of programs broadcast by the computer and the video projector showed positive values, bringing extra information to students, but also stimulating their critical faculties and elements of critical analysis of the current situation.

The presence of these means of training in the forms of organization of educational activity provides the opportunity to work with experimental montages to acquire the knowledge through own efforts within the practice of learning by discovery. At the same time it presents problematic situations to teaching, providing support for performing exercises and solving problems and triggers emotional attitudes (M. Teodor, 1980).

Applications we have conducted with the students were oriented in two directions: 1. projection and analysis of relevant educational films, previously recorded, in which "the actors" were either students practitioners from previous years or teachers who conducted educational activities on several occasions (inspections, demonstration of practical activities, etc.); 2. projection and analysis of records of current students who have conducted teaching and learning activities in kindergartens or schools within the teaching practice.

I think it is representative for the subject in question to illustrate some of the proposed activities for the students due to the use of the educational film in practical training:

- Elaboration based on a critical inventory of a list of errors associated with classroom teaching sequences observed in the various recordings;
- Identification of teaching conduits exhibited by the educational framework according to the main theories of learning;
- Deduction of consequences in terms of children's education organizing formal and non-formal learning situations;
- Identifying the causes of learning disabilities present in children and the proposal of possible solutions to remedy;
- Presentation of for and against arguments in relation to their own conduct manifested in the context of practical activities;

- Reference of their learning experiences to specific situations in the school curriculum environment.

Students were constantly encouraged to ask as many questions to the teacher or to colleagues who have held activities shown in the records. Interpersonal communication was stimulated by organizing discussions and debates among students where they were asked to argue the use of different ways of conducting educational activities, issuing new work variants, alternative to those already taken, possibly with a higher potential from a formative point of view, to openly and critically express their opinion etc.

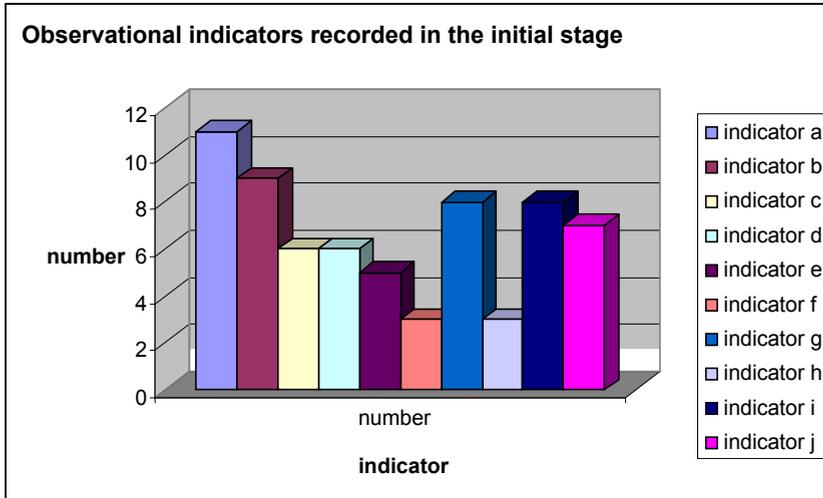
We appreciated that all these aspects of conducting educational activities are specific conditions and situations that may lead to the development of critical thinking and the forming of correct practical skills.

In order to have an increased relevance of results of the projection and analysis of educational videos for training students' practical skills we drew up an observation grid where we established a series of observational indicators. They were designed to measure the degree to which this kind of experience favors the formation of correct habits related to teaching practice activities of students. The observation grid was completed twice, once at the beginning of the school year, shortly after students began teaching practice, then in the middle of the semester, to notice any differences in results.

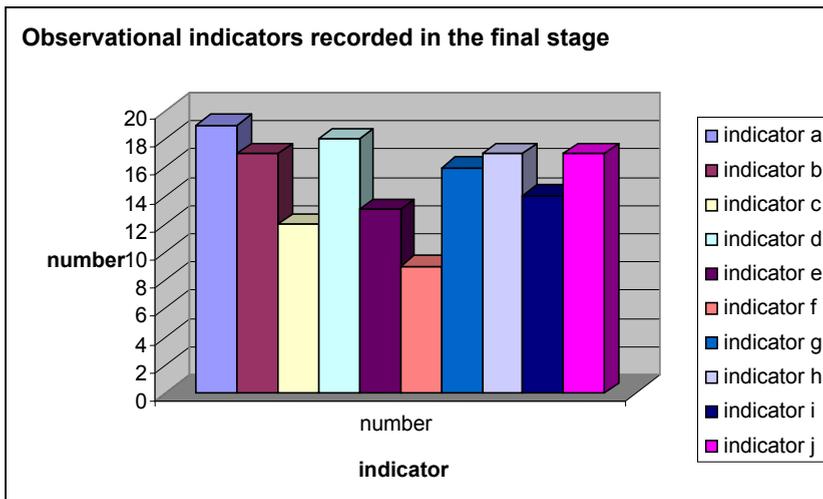
Registered observational indicators were:

- a. the number of students who are actively involved in analyzing projections;
- b. the number of questions asked towards the teachers and colleagues, in reference to the recordings;
- c. the number of correct sorting of relevant information from the recording;
- d. the number of references to their own learning experiences;
- e. the number of problems correctly identified by students;
- f. the number of interventions which involved providing alternative solutions to the issues pointed out in records;
- g. the number of references to theoretical knowledge learned in courses / seminars;
- h. appropriate number of personal reflections manifested in relation to teaching behaviors noticed in the film;
- i. the number of correct explanations associated with conducts observed in recordings;
- j. the number of correct identifications of errors of practical conduct, intentionally inserted into records.

Reported differences in the two phases are shown in the graphs below:



**Fig. 1.** Number of observational indicators recorded in the initial stage



**Fig. 2.** Number of observational indicators recorded in the final stage

As shown in the figures above, after a few weeks of performing teaching practice and analysis exercises of the presented teaching films, the 27 students involved in research, have shown that they have developed the ability of critical analysis of reported cases but also formed practical and appropriate behaviors adapted to pre-school and primary school education.

For example, the number of questions addressed to the teachers and colleagues, in reference to the recordings, had increased considerably, aspect that proved that students filter in their thoughts what they see in the recordings, trying to clarify various behavioral aspects. At the same time, in the final stage, the number of references to their own learning experiences, as well as the number of personal reflections in reference to noted behaviors on the screened film proved to be much higher, highlighting the relationship between theory and practice.

Students noticed errors of practical conduct, intentionally inserted in the recordings, much easier in the second phase, something that demonstrates that students have mastered the right skills to put into practice the theoretical knowledge acquired, being able to adopt an appropriate professional conduct.

Overall, all indicators registered an increase in the final stage, something that leads us to the conclusion that the teaching film used to form practical skills achieved its purpose.

## **Conclusions**

Modern society involves a new mode of social relations, as well as a new mode of acquiring knowledge, caused by radical reorganization of the knowledge itself. Given current technological progress, the efficiency of education depends on how we should adapt and engage in the conduct of educational process with these new technologies, with multiple effects on how to achieve the educational process.

Based on these considerations, in this study I tried to present a short research conducted on a group of students aimed to observe the ways in which the educational system can utilize the information and communication means for achieving optimal educational process. This research aimed to develop the students' critical thinking as well as the training of correct practical skills.

It was assumed that modern education guidelines aim to develop students' critical thinking by using active-participatory methods and techniques, which puts them in the center of the learning process (Dumitru I., 2001). This favors the equal formation of practical skills of students in effectively addressing the correlation acquisition of theoretical knowledge with their practical application.

Using the teaching film in academic learning contributes to the development of multicausal thinking that will make students think and find multiple solutions to different situations in which they find at some point in the educational career will pursue.

## REFERENCES

- Jinga, I., Negreț, I. (1994), "Învățarea eficientă", Editura Editis, București.
- Kolb, David, A. (1984), "Experiential learning, Experience as The Source of Learning and Development", Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 07632.
- Teodor, M., "Probleme pedagogice ale folosirii mijloacelor de învățământ în lecție", in *Revista de Pedagogie*, no. 9/1980.
- \*\*\* "Ghid metodologic. Tehnologia informației și a comunicațiilor în procesul educational, învățământ primar" (2001), București.
- \*\*\* "Materiale educaționale" – CD, Siveco România S.A.