

## Abstract

### **Technological variants and invariants: a basic training module for media education**

Since the advent of the first non-open source communication platforms for e-learning (proprietary), at the end of the 90s of the last century, it was already evident to many scholars of the pedagogical field as the economic-commercial structure on which they were based on pits in conflict with education intended as a public good to be shared as freely and equally as possible. Since then, the giants of digital technology that have established themselves and succeeded to this day have taken an interest and are increasingly interested in education and its institutions. Currently, many practices and discourses on 'digital education' end up favoring a broad process of reconfiguring education which is increasingly at risk of increasing compromise in relation to the market. Through their presence in schools, even philanthropic and free, they affect the tools used by teachers. This condition then inevitably leads to repercussions on the learning models adopted. With regard to media education, both in the declination to the media and with the media, one of the most common reasons used by teachers to justify the non-activation of media training courses is the obsolescence of the technical equipment in schools. This perception, often distorted, derives from at least two conditions of knowledges and skills in which teachers often find themselves. On the one hand, there is a lack of specifically technological knowledges and skills, on the other hand a lack of knowledges and skills that allow the teacher to critically manage the innovative commercial drive coming from the market of technical media equipment. While on the one hand the technical tools are still essential to be able to implement any path of media education, on the other hand this lack of knowledges and skills means that teachers are unable to evaluate with technical and didactic precision the technologies already present in schools, and that at the same time it is not possible to evaluate the additional technologies effectively needed.

From the perspective of media education we have begun to respond to this constant and experientially verified lack of knowledges and skills by activating a specific training module starting from the 2008-2009 academic year as part of the teaching of 'Theories and techniques of language radio-television with video-film and radio writing workshop' (Master's Degree Course in Theories and Methodologies of E-Learning and Media Education - University of Padua). The delivery of the module in this degree course lasted until the 2013-2014 academic year. From the following academic year (2014-2015) the contents of the module have been proposed until today in the context of the university teaching of 'Technologies of education and learning' (Master's Degree Course in Primary Education Sciences - University of L'Aquila).

The online training module was called 'Technological Variations and Invariants', it was the second in order of delivery of the different ones that made up the overall course in Padua, and was structured in an introductory video-pill by the teacher and a specific forum animated by a disciplinary expert tutor always in contact with the teacher. At the same time, the tutor was also an expert in interactive online communication.

Even if we were and are aware that these are concepts that encounter a significant margin of conceptual relativity and that for this reason it is difficult to propose a distinctive taxonomy between variants and technological invariants that are certain and stable over time, the video-pill, through a series of possible concrete examples, stimulated debate and in-depth analysis in the forum. These examples were focused on those aspects of media technologies whose knowledge allows the creation (writing) of a media text. The video-pill was also a reflection on technological

evolution through an attempt to constantly distinguish between the two categories of variants and invariants.

The primary didactic objective of this initial incipit, in addition to that of triggering the online educational debate, was to stimulate reflection on one of the possible interpretations in relation to the contemporary uses of the various technological tools for media education (camera, camera, software inside digital equipment, video-editing software, etc.). This reflection allowed the students to start distinguishing between the more constant and the changing aspects of a technical tool, and, thanks to the acquisition of this new awareness, to learn how to direct the choice of a technological object in relation to the didactic objectives that we intend to achieve in a training course and not on the basis of the latest news suggested by the market.

The contribution aims to be the precise description of this good didactic-training practice. This description will also make use of the aid of the observational research methodology thanks to the instrument of the longitudinal discursive analysis of all the written exchanges that took place on the platform between the students and the tutor in the six years of delivery of the module as part of the second cycle degree course blended at the University of Padua.

Parole chiave: educazione mediale – tecnologie mediali – didattica – sistemi educativi – mercato