Chapter 6

The Educational Use of Digital Storytelling in Virtual Classes of Entrepreneurship:
A Comprehensive Study of Students' Perceptions

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays there is a consensus on the importance that is given to entrepreneurship in the creation of wealth and employment in countries. In this context, entrepreneurship education is particular relevant. In fact, although there are currently several studies that investigates teaching methods of entrepreneurship in classroom, this subject continues understudied with regard to virtual classes where physical distance can difficult or even make impossible the use of some of the methodologies reported in several studies on this matter. Therefore, this chapter gives some background on the notion of Digital Storytelling, enhancing its relevance to the development of entrepreneurial skills, taking into account their particularities and the appropriate technologies. It also presents a study on the application of this methodology in a virtual class of entrepreneurship at Universidade Aberta (UAb). The results of virtual class students' perception on the use of Digital Storytelling in entrepreneurship teaching, suggests benefits in the use of this methodology.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays entrepreneurship is considered as a promoter for economic growth and employment. On the other hand, Digital Storytelling is a less known concept, despite it became more popular in last years, especially in the scholar context.

Therefore, it is important to understand how to use Digital Storytelling methodology to teach entrepreneurship. Although this methodology is becoming to be more used in diverse contexts such as theatre, media and marketing, there are few empirical studies with quantitative data to prove their relevance. This scenario becomes more evident when we study the subject of entrepreneurship in virtual classes. To overcome this gap, we intend to answer the following question: What is the students' perception on the use of Digital Storytelling in entrepreneurship teaching? The empirical study was applied in the students of the entrepreneurship curricular unit, in a management graduation course provided by Uab. This chapter is divided in three main parts. Firstly, we present a literature review, secondly an empirical study, and thirdly a SWOT analyses and also some concluding remarks.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital Storytelling Concept

Storytelling is the art of telling stories, and thus is a concept with three elements: narrator, story and audience. This technique organizes events in a logical manner, properly structured and appealing, being the oldest way of transmitting knowledge through generations. The stories told clearly influenced the values and behaviours of individuals.

The storyteller is an ancestral figure who has helped people understand better the world. No one can say for sure when it was told the first story. However, the scientific community agrees (Boyd, 2010; Campbell, 1991; Duarte, 2010) to point out the pre-history as the period in which this technique was first used to communicate and share knowledge.

Throughout the ages people told stories, but the way to do it suffered some changes. It started with cave paintings, then switched to oral histories, later on books were used and more recently emerged electronic resources. In fact, the advance of technology allowed audio-visual elements like sounds, images and videos to be digitally embedded in storytelling, thus giving rise to the concept Digital Storytelling. Table 1 shows some Digital Storytelling definitions.

Therefore Digital Storytelling can be defined as the act of telling little stories through the use of multimedia resources, such as audio, image and video.

The origin of this concept dates back to the late 80s of last century, when Joe Lambert, Nina Mullen and Dana Atchley helped create the Digital Storytelling movement as co-founders of the Center for Digital Storytelling, a non-profit organization located in California.

Since the early 90s, the Center for Digital Storytelling held numerous workshops where has trained and given assistance to people interested in creating and sharing stories about themselves, about other people, places, or even on the communities where they live (Robin, 2008). With the consolidation of Digital Storytelling movement and the interest of an increasing number of people, Digital Storytelling Association was created with representatives from several countries (Gakhar, 2007).

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