

Chapter 20

Transmedia Storytelling Edutainment and the New Testament Lesson

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ABSTRACT

Storytelling is the most ancient form of teaching that can enhance the learning experience, and transmedia is a technique where elements of a story get dispersed across multiple media with each story creating a cohesive entertainment experience. The storytelling framework is a viable solution to engage a universal audience, and the socio-cultural theory of learning presented underpins how cultural beliefs and attitudes impact instruction and learning. The study explores how the pre-historic practice of transmedia storytelling can be used and practiced by educators. Narratives transverse across media and can be traced back to the presentation of Biblical stories. The Bible story has been told across many different forms of media, from print to icons to stained glass windows. Jesus, the master teacher, used storytelling methods of instruction to convey his message to his learners across different platforms. The chapter explores the parallels between Biblical transmedia and contemporary transmedia and considers transmedia edutainment as a pedagogical practice in higher education.

INTRODUCTION

There is evidence of storytelling in every culture and in every land. The earliest forms of storytelling were primarily oral combined with expressions and gestures. The Bible is a pre-historical form of storytelling, and Jesus, one of the most depicted figures in history, used storytelling to connect with his audience and helped them to understand complex concepts. His stories were about what the people of that time could identify with and central to whom his listeners were.

Jesus was an extraordinary teacher who was proficient in narrative instruction. His teaching style drew massive crowds and held the attention of those who heard him. Jesus was a teacher who taught

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with compassion, and, for that reason, it is essential to study and acknowledge his methods. The paper addresses Jesus' teaching style and story structure methods, as well as the use of parables to teach lessons to people. Often, modern-day teachers overload students with a plethora of learning content, which is the opposite of the teaching methods of Jesus. The primary aim of this study is to ground the pedagogical practice in the social theoretical foundation and to show the benefits of the approach.

Transmedia storytelling, which is now supported by the Internet, provides a communal environment in the form of interactivity and participation. Stories contain universal themes that resonate on an emotional level with all human beings. Educators who use narratives in education can better communicate a lesson and engage a learner in retention and recall. Narrative instruction is a powerful learning tool, and learners who are emotionally and cognitively involved in the learning process can benefit. The persuasive power of stories and the emotional engagement with stories is something Jesus profoundly understood. The telling of a well-told tale encourages people to use their imagination so that they can interpret and amplify meaning. The Greek word *anamnesis* means to remember or recover the truth already within. Learning may be the rediscovery of truth that lies hidden deep in the soul, and which also connects all to one. It is imperative to connect to Jesus and to learn from his teaching practice, and this, in turn, will inform the learning experience.

The paper shows how the pre-historic practice of transmedia storytelling can be linked to current pedagogical practice, which can be used to educate learners in profound ways. Moreover, the work highlights the transmedia franchise, the characters in stories, and audience engagement. Transmedia storytelling edutainment involves the use of narratives as a holistic and critical-creative approach to learning, and it involves the use of stories to develop learning content around a particular discipline.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review is interdisciplinary and considers current and pre-historic transmedia storytelling practice, student engagement, the master teacher, Jesus, and the New Testament lesson. First, a search of the existing literature was conducted to select the keywords of the primary search. Second, the references of the selected papers and the citations were reviewed. Third, the selected papers were classified according to their content. A thorough search of the existing literature was done on the Internet, Google Scholar and in Scopus using a combination of keywords: transmedia, storytelling, narrative pedagogy, New Testament, holistic learning, social theoretical pedagogy, master teacher. The articles gathered were 289 and then reduced to 156 based on limitations such as source, language, duplication, or accessibility. After scanning titles and abstracts, 36 works were accepted that narrowed in on the topic to support the storytelling practice by way of social learning and collaboration.

Transmedia Storytelling

In the era of media convergence, transmedia storytelling provides users with the ability to interact with their favorite entertainment content across multiple media platforms and formats. Transmedia is a process where elements of story get dispersed across multiple media and each stand alone account creates an individualized and cohesive entertainment experience. Through transmedia, audiences can experience the story across multiple platforms such as TV, film, radio, magazine, books, games, online, CDs,

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