Innovative practices in education: pop culture and didactic possibilities

ARTICLE

Fernanda Castilho Santana[i] (iD)
UPEP/Centro Paula Souza, São Paulo, SP, Brasil
Clarice Greco Alves[ii] (iD)
Universidade Paulista, São Paulo, SP, Brasil

Abstract
The purpose of this article is to describe and analyze a series of teaching practices implemented by educators in higher education, focusing on a specific case study of a public institution in São Paulo. The key theoretical concepts under discussion include *teaching skills and knowledge* (Tardif, 2014), *media and education* (Orozco-Gómez, 1997), and *pop culture pedagogies* (Maudlin & Sandlin). It is presumed that educators employ popular culture material to enhance the process of teaching and learning. The study employed an exploratory and qualitative methodology, utilizing a questionnaire administered to the entire teaching staff of the university and conducting a focus group with professors from various courses. The objective was to ascertain the extent and manner in which pop culture information is incorporated into classroom instruction. The findings revealed diverse pedagogical opportunities, employing gaming formats such as RPGs, films, series, and music. Nevertheless, challenges were also identified about the process of organizing and the level of approval of certain material among the student population.
Keywords: Teaching Knowledge. Media and Education. Pedagogies of Pop Culture. Educommunication.

Práticas inovadoras em educação: cultura pop e possibilidades didáticas

Resumo
O objetivo deste artigo é descrever e analisar um conjunto de práticas didáticas realizadas por docentes do ensino superior, a partir do estudo de caso de uma faculdade pública de São Paulo. Os principais conceitos teóricos envolvem *saberes docentes* (Tardif, 2014), *mídias e educação* (Orozco-Gómez, 1997) e *pedagogias da cultura pop* (Maudlin e Sandlin, 2015). Partimos do pressuposto de que docentes utilizam conteúdos da cultura pop com o objetivo de facilitar o processo de ensino-aprendizagem. A metodologia teve caráter exploratório e qualitativo, com aplicação de questionário e grupo focal junto a professores de diferentes cursos de uma instituição de ensino superior tecnológico, com objetivo de entender se e/ou como conteúdos de cultura pop são utilizados em sala de aula. Os resultados indicaram diversas possibilidades didáticas, incluindo o uso de jogos como RPG, filmes, séries e músicas. No entanto, também foram apontadas dificuldades ao nível do planejamento e da aceitação de certos conteúdos pelo corpo discente.

Palavras-chave: Saberes Docentes. Mídias e Educação. Cultura Pop. Educomunicação.

1 Introduction

According to a number of authors who have thought about teacher training in contemporary times (Tardif, 2014; Zabala, 2015), and according to some reflections based on research into professional education in Brazil (Cordão, 2020; Peterossi and Menino, 2017), we have noticed that analyzing the professional role of teachers is extremely complex, as it is a diverse function and located in different contexts. In this article, the main focus is on the role of technological higher education teachers and their teaching practices, taking into account that they are very diverse professionals, but we believe they have some common characteristics. Based on the presentation of the concepts and reflections explored below, the following research question arises: are pop culture contents used in the classroom by higher education teachers?

One of the inherent characteristics of teachers in technological higher education is their significant work experience in the market and, on the other hand, their didactic training, which is often deficient due to the fact that their initial training does not involve degree courses. Thus, the didactic foundations can often be absent from their academic careers, which will require these professionals to be able to adapt to their working environment. Many teachers start their journey without knowing "how to teach" and learn by "teaching". As Maurice Tardif (2014) points out, the inspiration for this construction of a teaching identity comes from the memory of all the teaching figures that each person has had throughout their life. It is therefore expected that, throughout their career, teachers will go through various stages, from initial adaptation to maturity, acquiring and developing knowledge from practice and according to the conditions of the profession (Nunes, 2001). In this process, they will experience trials, errors and successes with students, in terms of lesson planning, teaching methods and the use of more traditional and more innovative methods.

Edward Janak and Denise Blum (2013) point out that today, for a number of structural reasons (corporate meddling, government control, initial training and the silencing of unions), teachers in general have stopped worrying about their more humanistic training and are unaware, for example, of the foundations of education and the precepts of pedagogical currents. As one of the consequences of this lack of general knowledge, we have a very undervalued category, dissatisfied on many levels, especially in terms of salaries and working conditions in Brazil. Janak and Blum (2013) speak in general terms about the US context, but their reflections apply, to a certain extent, to our reality when we look at this statement: "Teaching arguably is a semi-profession, not a full profession, lacking in control over its preparation and certification standards." (2023, p.24). It is in this sense that common-sense phrases such as: "Do you also work or do you just teach?" have emerged, reinforcing the stigma of teaching in Brazil. Thus, the profession is perceived in different contexts as complex, unrecognized and lacking in training.

On the other hand, Selma Pimenta (2006) argues that the teaching profession, like any other profession, is a practical exercise. Therefore, the way to learn involves observing, imitating and reworking existing models in practice, leading to constant improvement in the act of teaching. The author also states that, in the same way, students learn from teachers, through observation and imitation, but they also develop their own way of being, separating what they consider appropriate, adding their own elements and drawing on experiences and knowledge acquired in other spaces.

With the aim of looking at teachers as holders of lifelong knowledge and observing the training gaps in the area, the research field of "teaching knowledge" emerged, initially in the international context, starting in the countries of the global north in the 1980s, and consolidating in the 1990s (Borges and Tardif, 2001). During this period, reflections also emerged in the national context, with a special penetration of Portuguese texts (Nóvoa, 2009; Alarcão, 2022). From then on, there was national research, including theses and dissertations, which began to study teachers and their knowledge (Cardoso, 2012; Pimenta, 2008; Nunes, 2001). One of the milestones in national reflections is the publication of the dossier "Teachers' Knowledge and Training" in the journal *Educação &*

Sociedade in 2001. In the introduction to the book, Borges and Tardif (2001) highlight the amount of international research into teachers' knowledge, indicating that, since the end of the 1980s, there has been a large number of currents, approaches or theories. They state that "it can be said that this field of research has become an object of multi- and transdisciplinary investment, as well as a symbolic power struggle between different currents and disciplines, between different conceptions and approaches to knowledge" (p. 12).

1.1 Media and education in teaching practices

As mentioned, over the last 20 years we have seen the consolidation of a field of research into *teaching knowledge* in Brazil (Pimenta, 2008; Borges and Tardif, 2001), with different approaches. In this article, the main focus is on analyzing teaching knowledge and practices with the use of media, especially pop culture content, as we will discuss. To do this, we also need to define some important concepts for a general understanding of the research.

Firstly, when thinking about the link between media and education, it is important to understand that this is a field of study that analyzes the relationship between the media and education, highlighting the influence of the media on the cultural, social and cognitive formation of individuals. This subject recognizes the importance of communication technologies, such as television, the internet (especially social networks) and other forms of media, in order to understand their impact on the educational process. The critical approach seeks to examine not only the positive role of the media in disseminating knowledge, but also its negative effects, such as the spread of misinformation, biased content, manipulation of opinions and the impact on people's attention and behavior, especially among the younger generations (Wolton, 1999).

In addition, this critical reading of the media in education emphasizes the importance of developing media literacy, enabling people to understand, critically analyze and create media content (Livingstone, 2004). This includes teaching skills to evaluate

sources of information, recognize persuasive discourse and critically interpret messages conveyed by different media. In this way, the interaction between media and education is seen as a complex and dynamic field, which requires a critical approach to promote the formation of individuals who are aware of and critical of the use and influence of the media in contemporary society (Orozco-Gómez, 1997).

In Brazil, the concept of *educommunication* has emerged as an approach that proposes training focused on the relationship between the media and education, so that students become not only critical consumers of information, but also producers of content, using media tools ethically and responsibly (Citelli, 2010). Educommunication therefore proposes an integration between education and communication, aiming to enhance the educational process through the conscious and reflective use of the media, encouraging the active participation of students in the production and consumption of information and knowledge. Therefore, it is a practice that is somewhat widespread in Brazilian educational contexts. Based on this assumption, we understand that some higher education teachers in Brazil use media in their educational practice as a *communicative resource*, but we intend to look at it through the lens of pop culture.

Secondly, it is important to point out that the concept of *pop culture* differs from the concept of *popular culture*, although their boundaries are blurred and complex. Popular culture generally refers to the cultural elements, practices, beliefs, customs, artistic expressions, values and activities shared by a society in general, especially those that are widely accepted, disseminated and often associated with the general public, as opposed to erudite or elite culture (Abreu, 2003). It is often influenced by the social, economic and political conditions of a given period and place. Popular culture is dynamic and constantly evolving, being shaped by social interactions, migrations, technological advances and cultural exchanges. It can also be analyzed as a reflection of the ideas, values and concerns of a society at a given historical moment.

In turn, pop culture refers to contemporary culture that embraces the tastes, preferences, mass entertainment and fashions of today's society, especially in big cities, and is strongly influenced by the media, the entertainment industry and global trends. It

includes elements such as pop music, blockbuster movies (or those widely watched on streaming platforms), TV shows, celebrities, electronic games, current fashion, internet memes and other cultural phenomena that gain popularity at a given time. Pop culture is often marketed and distributed repeatedly, reaching audiences from different social and cultural backgrounds. In general, therefore, pop culture is propagated by media culture (Janotti Jr., 2015), has entertainment as its genesis and "establishes forms of enjoyment and consumption that permeate a certain sense of community, belonging or sharing of affinities that situate individuals within a transnational and globalizing sense" (Soares, 2014, p. 2).

Thus, while the more traditional concept of popular culture points to the traditions and identities of specific groups and can be transmitted over time, pop culture is more ephemeral, centered on contemporary trends and influences that permeate today's society, often driven by the media, especially the internet. In other words, there can be intersections between popular culture and pop culture.

1.2 Pedagogies of pop culture

This article aims to observe innovative practices and didactic possibilities pointed out by higher education technology teachers who use pop culture content (such as films, TV series, games, comics, anime, etc.) in the classroom. The research idea arose from international literature (Maudlin and Sandlin, 2015; Dial-Driver *et al.*, 2014; Janak and Blum, 2013; Smith *et al.*, 2008; Mahiri, 2000) and more recent national literature (Silva, 2021) on the possibilities of using pop culture in education, what some authors call *pop culture pedagogies.*

According to Julie Maudlin and Jennifer Sandlin (2015), just as there are many ways of describing what pop culture is, there are multiple ways of understanding how it works pedagogically, inside and outside the classroom. These authors explore the depth and breadth of contemporary pop culture, proposing a self-study framework for instructional decision-making and critical approaches to teaching and learning from the "pedagogies of

pop culture" (2015, p. 368). Thus, the authors explore specific pedagogical strategies that incorporate pop culture into the curriculum, such as using song lyrics to discuss relevant topics, analyzing movies or TV shows to explore complex concepts, using games to hone skills, among other creative and innovative approaches (Maudlin and Sandlin, 2015).

The idea of pop culture as pedagogy is also explored by Kaela Jubas *et al.* (2015), based on public pedagogy (popularized by Carmen Luke and Henry Giroux), which covers a wider range of cultural forms, such as museums, galleries, social media and culture jamming (a term that indicates cultural and social intervention practices). In the case of pop culture as pedagogy, in the proposal by Jubas *et al.* (2015), the focus is on film and television texts, and on observing their significant role in the cultural and educational formation of viewers/learners.

The term pop pedagogy is the title of the chapter by Jesse Stallings (2014) in the book organized by Emily Dial-Driver *et al.* (2014) on the use of fantasy (titles with witches, vampires and/or heroes such as Harry Potter, Twilight and Buffy the Vampire Slayer are the most cited) in education. The three sections of the book will highlight the study of classic titles, using the lens of fantasy to enrich traditional lessons, as well as the use of light-hearted themes to teach complex subjects such as political science. This research has been published in the form of articles in journals and books in the Anglo-Saxon context and points to trends since the first decade of the 21st century.

In a simple consultation of the Capes[1] journal portal, in English, the expression "pop culture pedagogies", as well as the term in Portuguese ("*pedagogias da cultura pop*") did not show any results. This suggests that the concept is unknown and/or not very widespread in Brazil, which makes this article the first on this theoretical perspective. The most commonly used term in reference to the dialog between cultural products and education seems to be *cultural pedagogies* - which, when searched for in quotation marks, results in 270 works. The concept, used in the plural precisely because it has multiple uses,

---

[1] Journal search site of the largest higher education development and evaluation agency in Brazil - Capes - Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel. Available at: https://www-periodicos-capes-gov-br.ezl.periodicos.capes.gov.br/index.php? Acessed on Dec 2023.

has been applied in Brazil since the 1990s, based on the theoretical framework of Cultural Studies in its intersection with education. A broader approach to Cultural Studies is not the aim of this work, but it may point the way to future research. Here, we have chosen to continue with the concept of pop culture pedagogies, as it is closely related to the theoretical and practical approach of our research.

As mentioned above, from all these reflections, the question that guided this research arises: are pop culture contents used in the classroom by technology higher education teachers?

The methodological procedures used for this study will be described below.

2 Methodology

The methodological process of this research initially involved a literature review to map out the following concepts: teaching knowledge in the field of professional and technological education; media, education and educommunication; popular culture and pop culture; pop culture pedagogies (based on international literature). There was also a continuation of the theoretical work carried out previously, in which the concept of the teacher-fan was proposed, thinking about the identity of the teacher as a consumer of pop culture. The idea of the *teacher-fan* was conceived, in part, from theorizations that articulate the concept of *fan*, derived from international studies on fans (Fiske, 1992; Jenkins, 2006; Booth, 2010; Hills, 2002; Sandvoss, 2013) as well as national ones (Lopes *et al.*, 2017, Castilho, 2019), with the concept of *aca-fan* (the academic who is a fan of their object of research). These notions also helped inform the questions in the instruments described below.

Thus, a hypothetical relationship was established indicating the use of pop culture media content, based on knowledge obtained by teachers and students in more general life experiences and not in formal teaching spaces. In this way, self-learning and practical experiences act as a way of filling a training gap in vocational and technological education.

In this way, the empirical aim of the research is to find out whether teachers in technology higher education use pop culture content in the classroom and, if so, how these didactic practices take place, observing innovations, possibilities, practical objectives achieved and the main difficulties.

It is important to note that this research is part of a larger project[2], which aims to describe a set of teaching practices involving the use of pop culture in higher technical and technological higher vocational education in the state of São Paulo. However, for this article, in a limited way, we carried out a case study in a public technological teaching college, located in the metropolitan region of São Paulo, founded in 2009, with 10 higher education courses (degrees) in operation in 2023[3].

In this sense, there is also continuity in the theorizing carried out previously, where the concept of the fan-teacher is proposed, thinking about the identity of the teacher as a consumer of pop culture, which also helped to substantiate the questions in the instruments described below.

To carry out the research, an exploratory and qualitative approach was used, employing two instruments:

a. Online questionnaire (Google Forms platform) with 15 closed and open questions, distributed to the institution's teaching staff via online WhatsApp groups. The aim was to carry out a general analysis of the profile of the respondents (age, gender, length of teaching experience, area of training) and to explore questions about their media consumption and the use of pop culture in the classroom. The questionnaire was sent on October 3, 2023 to members of the educational institution who were present in the WhatsApp group. 49 people saw the link (available to fill in for a week), but only 15 people

---

[2]In the Postgraduate Program, the project entitled "Fan Teacher: teaching identity and cultural objects in the classroom", from the research group "Knowledge and Teaching Work in Professional Education" and in partnership with the project "Fan Activism: claims and representativeness in pop culture", is coordinated by one of the authors.
[3]Technological degrees in Foreign Trade, Digital Media Design, Events, HR Management, IT Management, E-commerce Management, Business and People Management, Business Management, Logistics and Land Transportation.

responded[4]. So, from a universe of 100 teachers working at the school at the time of the survey, our sample consists of 15 teachers. This step was also aimed at delimiting the qualitative sample for a later focus group. Although the questionnaire was anonymous, respondents could indicate an email address at the end;

b. A face-to-face focus group was held with teachers from different courses at the college, using a semi-structured script of questions. The aim was to understand whether and how pop culture content is used in the classroom. In the same way, the invitation was distributed to the academic unit, 51 read the invitation message on WhatsApp, six teachers took part in the focus group (of these, only two had answered the online questionnaire). The meeting was held on 30/11/2023, on the premises of the teaching unit, lasting 1h23, audio-recorded with the authorization of the participants. The focus group was mediated by two researchers (one of whom is a teacher at the same institution), who were responsible for asking questions, observing and taking notes. All the participants were aware of the nature of the discussion and were informed that their data would be anonymized and, at the time of the questionnaire, they signed the informed consent form.

The analysis procedures involved a descriptive analysis of the questionnaire, systematizing and visualizing the profile data and grouping the answers according to the themes of interest to the research, such as music and series used in the classroom. Analysis of the focus group involved transcribing the recording and then carrying out a thematic analysis to identify patterns, interactions, recurring themes and ideas emerging from the participants' responses (Gatti, 2005).

3 Results e discussion

3.1 Questionnaire

---

[4]This is a public technological teaching college, where teachers can be employed through a competitive examination or simplified selection process. As such, the number of active teachers may vary. In 2023, new courses were opened at this teaching unit, which could also slightly change this total number.

The first research results emerged from the analysis of the answers to the questionnaire, where we could see three age groups: 35 to 44 years old (five people), 45 to 54 (five people) and 55 to 64 (five people), divided between women (53.3%) and men (46.7%). With regard to teaching time, the majority have more than 10 years' experience, with eight people having more than 20 years, one with 16 to 20 years, five with 11 to 15 years and one with 1 to 5 years. In terms of qualifications, 46.7% have a doctorate and none of the respondents have a teaching degree. Of the participants, 11 indicated that their main area of training was in the humanities/social sciences and four had a degree in the exact sciences. The majority teach more than one course at the unit and, in general, do not have specific training in education, such as a teaching degree.

After describing the profile of the respondents, we went on to analyze their answers regarding media consumption of pop culture, fan practices and the use of this content in the classroom. First of all, we tried to understand whether these people were familiar with the term fan, and five said they were, but didn't consider themselves fans, five said they might be fans and five said they were fans. Next, we asked about the frequency and practices of consumption of films, series, music, games, etc.: eight (53.3%) watch, read or listen to them frequently; seven (46.7%) share and spread the word among their peers; four (26.7%) comment, evaluating and participating with other fans; two (13.3%) are creators of fan content (texts, images, videos, etc.); no one is a content curator, editing, moderating and influencing other people and four didn't check any of the above.

Thus, we noticed a clear division into three profiles of the survey participants, which we call *fans, consumers and distracted* - a classification created from the typology of Lopes *et al.* (2017). For those who self-identify as fans, we asked what their favorite cultural products are: music, series, films and comics were the most mentioned. There were single mentions of soap operas, documentaries and sports (such as Formula 1). Genres were specified by three respondents, indicating foreign dramas (such as The Handmaid's Tale) and Korean dramas. One person was quite punctual:

A fan of comics (especially Marvel and Batman) and graphic novels (European, Argentinian, North American and Brazilian), manga and anime (One Piece, Naruto, Yu Yu Hakusho, Saint Seiya, Studio Ghibli, Akira, Cowboy Bebop etc.), fantasy, science fiction and thriller books, films and series based on books and comics (Lord of the Rings, The Handmaid's Tale, Total Recall, Minority Report, Star Wars, Star Trek, etc.) (Teacher 13 - questionnaire).

Thus, we have different levels of teacher-fans and, therefore, it is expected that classroom use will also follow these modulations. For this reason, the next questions in the questionnaire sought to understand how often teachers use this content in their teaching practice, how important it is in the teaching-learning process, and how they select this content. 40% (6) of the participants believe it to be very important, 26.7% (4) extremely important, while another 26.7% (4) say it is relatively important and 6.7% (1) see no importance. When comparing the two graphs (Fig.1), we noticed that the frequency varied slightly, indicating that even those who believe in its importance don't use this content that often, which led us to delve deeper during the focus group into the reasons that hinder the use of this content.

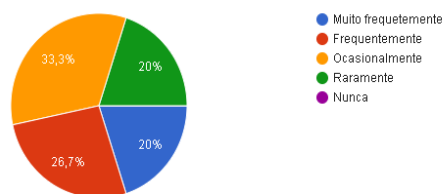Figure 1: Graphs with frequency and importance of pop culture uses in the classroom
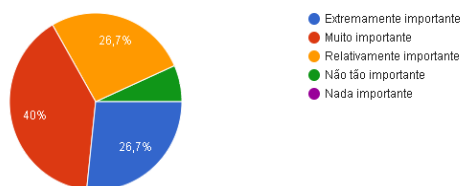
Source: Elaborated by the author.

The educational ways in which this media content is used vary greatly. Some people use games to fix content and develop quick thinking, others to contextualize, exemplify, indicate cultural differences and similarities. Others believe that showing examples with videos and movie clips is a tool for drawing attention to the content. Media

education also comes up, indicating that classes can be a space for critical consumption of pop culture.

Finally, participants were asked how they select the cultural products used in the classroom. The majority pointed to the issue of adherence to the content, i.e. after the concepts have been explained, media content can help learning through examples. Some indicated that the content needs to engage the students, so it needs to be something they know, something that is trending, in other words, something that came from the students. One participant indicated both ways:

> *1 - Cultural products that I consume and have carried out personal research on; 2 - Current cultural products that students show an interest in in class or ask me about during lessons. In both cases, I use them in the context of lessons, when they make sense for the development of the students' visual and critical repertoire (Teacher 9 - questionnaire).*

After this stage of empirical research, we observed the mobilization of different types of knowledge by these teachers in the context of selecting pop culture content as a pedagogical strategy. However, we noticed obstacles inherent in the process, which we would like to delve into qualitatively in a second investigative stage, with a focus group. At this first stage, some teachers said they didn't consider themselves fans of any cultural product, so although they certainly consume it in their leisure time, they don't bring it into the classroom. On the other hand, there are different levels and ways of implementing pop culture content in teaching practices. So, in general terms, what are the main advantages and disadvantages of using pop culture as a teaching strategy?

3.2 Focus group

Six teachers took part in the focus group, with relatively different profiles. There were more women (4) than men (2), as two of the confirmed participants were unable to attend on the scheduled day. Although it was relatively difficult to get enough participants together on the same day and at the same time for a debate that lasted more than an hour,

the atmosphere was relaxed, since one of the mediators has also been a teacher at the institution for almost eight years and knew three of the participants from the teachers' lounge.

Table 1. Profile of focus group participants/teachers

Teachers	Age group (years)	Area of training (degree)	Teaching experience (years)	Self-identification as a fan	Pop culture in lesson plans	Pop culture in sporadic activities	Cult pop - actions
João[5]	45 - 54	Administration	Over 15	yes	yes	yes	List of movies and series for each subject, RPG, Cosplay
Maria	45 - 54	Pedagogy	Over 20	maybe	no	yes	Songs for every moment (music therapy), popcorn movies
Silvia	35 - 44	Education	Over 10	maybe	yes	yes	Videocurriculum, films, music, videos, fantasy characters
Vanessa	45 - 54	Tourism	Over 20	maybe	yes	yes	Cinema with popcorn, gamification, social media content
Amanda	45 - 54	Administration	Over 20	no	no	yes	Excerpts from movies and music, mythology
Cláudio	35 - 44	IT Management	Over 10	yes	yes	yes	Gamification, fantasy characters

Source: Elaborated by the author.

After a brief presentation of the research objectives and the definition of pop culture, we asked the group about the use of this type of content in their classes. The reactions to the question were quite different. Some people began to answer promptly, indicating that they had experience with the subject, which was explored throughout the conversation. In fact, it was these teachers who asked for the floor the most during the

---

[5]All the names of the research participants have been changed to preserve their anonymity. We have kept only the gender for comparative analysis purposes.

debate. On the other hand, we noticed that one or two people were surprised, trying to understand if their practices could fit in with what we were questioning. Even in this first approach, the reactions were interesting research findings because, within the framework of the set of teaching knowledge and competences, teachers are expected to be able to reflect on and research teaching in order to analyze the teaching-learning process (Puentes *et al.*, 2009).

In this sense, at a certain point in the conversation, almost all the participants (except the female pedagogues) pointed out gaps from a training/pedagogical point of view, as they rarely had moments to reflect on teaching practices, corroborating the theory (Janak and Blum, 2013). On the other hand, the wealth of pedagogical strategies pointed out during the conversation was surprising, especially coming from teachers who don't have a teaching degree. Teacher "João", for example, began by saying that he was a great fan of films and series and, throughout his teaching career, he has built up a list of films and series for each subject he teaches, which is updated over time according to student acceptance. For him, the development of non-traditional teaching methodologies helps in the teaching-learning process, especially for teachers who have come from the professional world and are used, for example, to meeting sales targets: "I need *to sell* my content to the students". João commented that the school's social room can also help with professional development, as he has shared many experiences with his peers, including the list of films and series mentioned.

We thus realize that the skills required to practice teaching, such as planning the teaching-learning process, selecting and preparing subject content, offering understandable and well-organized information and explanations (communication), handling new technologies, designing the methodology and organizing activities (Zabalza, 2007; Puentes, *et al.*, 2009) are teaching skills that come from experience, reflection and interaction with students and educational contexts (Pimenta, 2008).

Note that the length of experience of the focus group participants varies between 10 and 20 years (or more) of teaching. More diversified teaching strategies are created by

those with more experience, such as the participant "Vanessa"[6], who mobilizes her classes through a points system. The teacher has created a currency of exchange: students who help deepen the subject by bringing content (including pop culture) from the previous class, earn a "prof-coin" and, of course, participation points. "That's how I became a cryptocurrency!" says the teacher, who literally has her face stamped on the chocolate coin. According to Vanessa, engaging classes requires a teacher-disciple approach, and keeping up to date with their cultural universe is important, such as gamification. She also mentions the use of viral videos on the internet, memes and controversial stories, always related to the content of the lesson, but often indicated by students:

I use a lot of material from Instagram and TikTok to bring you new things about social event ceremonies. A few weeks ago, a meme went viral on the internet about a gentleman who was dressed in sportswear and he went in sportswear because he didn't know the difference[7], so, of course, everyone saw it, it was a good discussion. I use a lot of material from Instagram and TikTok to bring new things about social event ceremonies (Vanessa, focus group).

Figure 2: Dress code meme

Source: Tik Tok

Figure 3: Teacher's chocolate coin

Source: own elaboration (photo)

[6]Events teacher.

[7]O caso foi notícia no interior do Estado de São Paulo - Homem confunde traje esporte fino e vai a casamento em Jaboticabal, SP, com roupa de academia. Disponível em: https://g1.globo.com/sp/ribeirao-preto-franca/noticia/2023/09/25/homem-confunde-traje-esporte-fino-e-vai-a-casamento-em-jaboticabal-sp-com-roupa-de-academia.ghtml Acesso em janeiro de 2023.

In overall terms, entertainment content on the internet, although indicated as a component of class deconcentration, can also mean bridges between young people's cultural repertoires and the didactic content of the course.

Based on the reports of the focus group participants, we observed the use of audiovisuals (films, short videos, documentaries and series) and music as strategies already incorporated into teaching, now with the help of the internet. As we have seen, the use of media in education has been gaining momentum in Brazil since the 1990s, especially with television, when it became a possible technology in some school contexts. Currently, there is concern about the inappropriate use of the internet by teachers, something that happened in a similar way in the past with television, but which still worries teachers.

One of the difficulties in using pop culture pointed out by the research participants was the stigma of a lack of seriousness on the part of teachers, i.e. the difficulty in defining the boundaries between entertainment and education. According to the reports, the so-called "cinema with popcorn", i.e. a lesson dedicated to watching a movie, is a common practice for some and uncommon for others. The practice is based on choosing a movie that enables discussions around the syllabus. The selection of audiovisual works by teachers can take two paths. The first is when the teacher selects a movie that the students know and like. In this case, as Mahiri (2000) says about the pedagogies of pop culture, this resource would help to circumvent the limits of learning because they are more easily appropriated by young people for leisure, identification and a sense of personal power. On the other hand, the second way is to show unpopular films that are difficult for students to access, or so-called 'cult' films (Greco, 2019). In this sense, this pop culture pedagogy would reduce existing cultural inequalities and help democratize access to audiovisual art.

There are those who point to inadequate institutional conditions, such as poor classroom comfort or a ban on food (which makes it impossible to eat popcorn on movie days, for example), despite the fact that the school in question currently has smart TVs in almost every room. Teacher "Amanda" pointed out the low concentration of classes on longer audiovisual content, but mainly the feeling of having to justify the reasons for that content very well, because "the student might think it's infantilizing teaching". According to

her, some pop culture content works better in more mature classes, who understand the context better because "it's not just playing the video, it's understanding the purpose of the activity". In this sense, we revisited the text by Morán (1995), in which he points out possible uses of video in the classroom, indicating inappropriate practices already seen in education, such as *gap-filler video*, *stall video*, among others. The most emblematic for our discussion are the categories *video-dazzle* and *video-only* (Morán, 1995, p. 29), i.e. the teacher who only plays videos for the whole lesson, every lesson, as the teacher "João" reports: "sometimes we hear this kind of comment, that this teacher only plays movies... but then you have a misrepresentation of the use of pop culture".

Electronic and board games, another contemporary study trend in the field of education, also appear as a didactic possibility in the reports. Participant "João" uses RPG[8] strategies, which he learned when he was a gamer in his youth. Participant "Cláudio" brings materials and examples of digital games and gamified tools to stimulate competition between students. Participant "Silvia" prepares oral language tests in karaoke format, as well as proposing gamified activities with character creation. For all this, the six participants agreed on the need for a certain amount of dedication on the part of the teacher when it comes to (re)planning lessons and constantly keeping up to date, especially with students' media consumption trends.

4 Conclusions

In the sphere of professional and technological education, it is clear that many teachers face challenges in relation to their training, especially with regard to didactics. The reality shows a significant gap in the training of many teachers in this specific field. There are a number of reasons for this lack of didactic preparation among vocational and technological education teachers. As stated before, many of these professionals have their initial training based on technical knowledge specific to their area of expertise, such as

---

[8]RPG stands for "Role-Playing Game": it's a game in which people play characters and create narratives around an imagined plot.

engineering, IT, health, among others. This training generally lacks emphasis on pedagogy and teaching methodologies, which results in a deficit in the mastery of didactic practices.

In addition, the lack of continuing training programs or pedagogical updates specific to the context of professional and technological education contributes to the persistence of this unpreparedness. The majority of teacher training courses do not deal in depth with teaching strategies aimed at this type of education, which requires didactic skills adapted to the needs and characteristics of the students in this environment. Consequently, this lack of preparation in terms of didactics can have a direct impact on the quality of teaching offered in this context. Teachers who do not have sufficient teaching skills may face difficulties in engaging students, making lessons more dynamic and contextualized, or even applying methodologies that promote the integration of theory and practice, which is so necessary in professional and technological education (Cordão, 2020; Manfredi, 2017).

These were the main complaints among the participants in this research, teachers in technological higher education who had to implement teaching methodologies and content on their own, using their own knowledge or in dialog with colleagues to make their classes more attractive to young people and adults. From this emerges the importance of pop culture in the school context.

From the reports, we were also able to observe modulations in terms of the levels of *teacher-fans*: (1) *The distracted ones*, who don't consider themselves fans, but consume pop culture content and are afraid to bring it into the classroom, like participant "Amanda"; (2) *The assiduous consumers* who add pop culture in the usual way when planning lessons, like participant "Silvia"; (3) *Fans* who have lists of films and series for each subject, such as participant "João"; (4) Fans not just of pop culture, but *fans of pop culture in education*, such as participant "Vanessa", who has even created a playful cryptocurrency to entertain classes and gamify lessons.

Therefore, we end by answering the research question: is pop culture content used in the classroom by technology higher education teachers? Although we can't generalize, as the research approach is qualitative, we can observe that, in the localized context of analysis, technology higher education teachers use pop culture content in their teaching

practices, with prior planning and quite varied methodologies. The top positive aspects were: (1) Motivating/engaging students; (2) Media education, new ways of reading and writing; (3) Breaking the ice, bringing classes closer together; (4) Recreating meanings, i.e. understanding theories through what they are curious about; (5) Showing examples. The main negative aspects were: (1) Limit between fun/entertainment and education; (2) Traditional idea: I can't "subject" myself to the tastes of young people; (3) Need to know current references; (4) Have a presence on the latest social networks to get to know the universe of pop culture discussions (memes, jokes, etc).

It is therefore crucial to invest in continuing education programs aimed specifically at teachers working in this area, offering tools, methods and pedagogical strategies to help them improve their teaching practice and enhance the quality of teaching in vocational and technological education, including, for example, the use of pop culture products. Such programs will benefit from knowledge of effective practices already carried out by contemporary teachers, such as those highlighted in this paper.

References

ABREU, Martha. Cultura popular, um conceito e várias histórias. *In*: ABREU, Martha; SOIHET, Rachel. (Orgs.). **Ensino de história, conceitos, temáticas e metodologias**. Rio de Janeiro: Casa da Palavra, 2003. p. 83-102.

ALARCÃO, Isabel. **Professores reflexivos em uma escola reflexiva**. São Paulo: Cortez Editora, 2022.

BOOTH, Paul. **Digital fandom: new media studies**. Nova Iorque: Peter Lang, 2010.

BORGES, Cecília; TARDIF, Maurice. Apresentação do Dossiê: Os saberes dos docentes e sua formação. **Educação & Sociedade**, São Paulo, v. 22, n. 74, p. 11-26, 2001. Disponível em: https://doi.org/10.1590/S0101-73302001000100002. Acesso em: Dez 2023.

CARDOSO, Aliana. Professores? Sim! Os saberes docentes e os professores da Educação Profissional [**Dissertação de mestrado**]. Universidade Federal de Pelotas, 2012. Disponível em: https://bit.ly/3S1GrHK. Acesso em: 12 jan. 2024.

CASTILHO, Fernanda. **Teletube**: TV transmídia, ficção e fãs online. Curitiba: Appris, 2019.

CITELLI, Adilson. Comunicação e educação: Implicações contemporâneas. **Comunicação & Educação**, São Paulo, v. 15, n. 2, p. 13-27, 2010. Disponível em: https://doi.org/10.11606/issn.2316-9125.v15i2p13-27. Acesso em: 20 dez. 2023.

CORDÃO, Francisco; MORAES, Francisco. **Educação profissional no Brasil**: Síntese histórica e perspectivas. São Paulo: Senac, 2020.

DIAL-DRIVER, Emily.; EMMONS, Sally.; FORD, Jim. (Orgs.). **Fantasy media in the classroom**: Essays on teaching with film, television, literature, graphic novels, and video games. Jefferson: McFarland, 2014.

FISKE, John. The Cultural Economy of Fandom. In: LEWIS, Lisa A. *The* **Adoring Audience**: Fan Culture and Popular Media. Londres: Routledge, 1992.

GATTI, Bernadete Angelina. **Grupo focal na pesquisa em ciências sociais e humanas**. São Paulo: Líber, 2005.

GRECO, Clarice. **Qualidade na TV**: telenovela, crítica e público. São Paulo: Atlas, 2019. HILLS, Matt. **Fan cultures**. Londres: Routledge, 2002.

JANAK, Edward; BLUM, Denise. (Orgs.). **The pedagogy of pop**: Theoretical and practical strategies for success. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2023.

JANOTTI, Jeder Jr. Cultura pop: entre o popular e a distinção. In: SÁ, Simone de; CARREIRO, Rodrigo; FERRARAZ, Rogério (Orgs.). **Cultura pop**. Salvador: Edufba; Compós, 2015. p. 45-56.

JENKINS, Henry. **Fans, bloggers, and gamers**: Exploring participatory culture. Nova Iorque: New York University Press, 2006.

JUBAS, Kaela; TABER, Nancy; BROWN, Tony (Eds.). **Popular culture as pedagogy**: Research in the field of adult education. Nova Iorque: Springer, 2015.

LIVINGSTONE, Sonia. What is media literacy?. **Intermedia**, 2004, v.32,n.3, p. 18-20. LOPES, Maria Immacolata Vassallo; GRECO, Clarice; CASTILHO, Fernanda; LEMOS, Lemos; PEREIRA, Tissiana; LIMA, Mariana; ORTEGA, Daniela. **Sujeito acadêmico e seu objeto de afeto**: aca-fãs de ficção televisiva no Brasil. In: LOPES, Maria Immacolata Vassallo (org.). Por uma teoria de fãs da ficção televisiva brasileira II: práticas de fãs no ambiente da cultura participativa. Porto Alegre: Sulina, 2017. p.367-404.

LOPES, Maria Immacolata Vassallo. Telenovela como recurso comunicativo. **MATRIZes**, 2009, v. 3, n.1, p.21-47.

MAHIRI, Jabari. Pop culture pedagogy and the end(s) of school. **Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy**, v. 44, n. 4, p. 382, 2000. Disponível em: link.gale.com/apps/doc/A68546715/AONE?u=anon~9655a812&sid=googleScholar&xid=77095212. Acesso em: 22.03.2024.

MANFREDI, Silvia Maria. **Educação profissional no Brasil**: atores e cenários ao longo da história. Jundiaí: Paco Editorial, 2017.

MAUDLIN, Jennifer; SANDLIN, Jullie. Pop culture pedagogies: Process and praxis. **Educational Studies**, v. 51, n. 5, p. 368-384, 2015.

MORÁN, José Manuel. O vídeo na sala de aula. **Comunicação & Educação**, v.2, p. 27-35, 1995. Disponível em: https://doi.org/10.11606/issn.2316-9125.v0i2p27-35. Acesso em: 30 de dez de 2023.

NUNES, Célia Maria Fernandes. Saberes docentes e formação de professores: um breve panorama da pesquisa brasileira. **Educação e Sociedade**, São Paulo, v. 22, n. 74, p. 27-42, abr. 2001. Disponível em: http://www.scielo.br/pdf/es/v22n74/a03v2274.pdf. Acesso em: Out 2023.

OROZCO-GÓMEZ, Guillermo. Professores e meios de comunicação: Desafios, estereótipos. **Comunicação & Educação**, São Paulo, n. 10, p. 57-68, 1997. Disponível em: https://doi.org/10.11606/issn.2316-9125.v0i10p57-68. Acesso em: Jan 2024.

PETEROSSI, Helena; MENINO, Sérgio. **A formação do formador**. São Paulo: Ed. Centro Paula Souza, 2017.

PIMENTA, Selma. Saberes pedagógicos e atividade docente. In: CAMPOS, E. N. (Ed.). **Saberes da docência**. São Paulo: Cortez, 2008.

PIMENTA, Selma Garrido; LIMA, Maria Socorro Lucena. Estágio e docência: diferentes concepções. **Revista Poíesis** -Volume 3, Números 3 e 4, pp.5-24, 2005/2006.

PUENTES, Roberto Valdés; AQUINO, Orlando Fernández; QUILLICI NETO, Armindo. Profissionalização dos professores: conhecimentos, saberes e competências necessários à docência. **Educar em Revista**, v. 34, p. 169-184, 2009.

SANDVOSS, Cornel. Quando Estrutura e Agência se Encontram: os fãs e o poder. **Ciberlegenda**, n. 28, 2013.

SILVA, Heraldo Aparecido (Ed.). **Cultura pop e filosofia**: Quadrinhos, cinema, seriados, animações, internet e afins. João Pessoa: Marca de Fantasia, 2021.

SMITH, Alisson; SMITH, Trixie; BOBBITT, Rebecca. **Teaching in the pop culture zone**: Using popular culture in the composition classroom. Cengage Learning, 2008.

SOARES, Ismar. Educomunicação: um campo de mediações. **Comunicação & Educação**, n. 19, p. 12-24, 2000.

STALLINGS, Jesse. Pop pedagogy. In: DIAL-DRIVER, Emily; EMMONS, Sally; FORD, Jim (Orgs.). **Fantasy media in the classroom**: Essays on teaching with film, television, literature, graphic novels, and video games. Jefferson: McFarland, 2014. pp. 11-23.

TARDIF, Maurice. **Saberes docentes e formação profissional**. São Paulo: Vozes, 2014.

WOLTON, Dominique. **Pensar a comunicação**. Algés: Difel, 1999.

ZABALA, Antoni. **A prática educativa**: como ensinar. Porto Alegre: Penso Editora, 2015.

ZABALZA, Miguel. **Competencias docentes del profesorado universitario**: Calidad y desarrollo profesional. Madri: Narcea Ediciones, 2017.

[i]**Fernanda Castilho Santana,** ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2301-0554
UPEP/Centro Estadual de Educação Tecnológica Paula Souza.
Professora do Programa de Pós-graduação em Educação Profissional do Centro Estadual de Educação Tecnológica Paula Souza (CEETEPS). Doutora e mestre pela Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Coimbra (FLUC/Portugal). Pós-doc pela Universidade de São Paulo.
Authorship contribution: Data collection and writing
Lattes: http://lattes.cnpq.br/6930826232431610
Email: fernanda.castilho@cpspos.sp.gov.br

[i]**Clarice Greco Alves,** ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2603-6808
Universidade Paulista (UNIP).
Professora do Programa de Pós-graduação em Comunicação na Universidade Paulista (UNIP). Doutora e mestre pela Escola de Comunicações e Artes da Universidade de São Paulo.
Authorship contribution: Data collection and review
Lattes: http://lattes.cnpq.br/6496657677964286
Email: claricegreco@gmail.com

Responsible publisher: Genifer Andrade

Ad hoc expert: Doriele Andrade Duvernoy and Luciana Canário Mendes