

Visual literacy

Education



Article Summary--From Silent Film to Youtube™ Schools Number and of (e. g., October 12, 2009)

In the study entitled From Silent Film to Youtube™: Tracing the Historical Roots of Motion Picture Technologies in Education, three major propositions were presented by Chareen Snelson and Ross Perkins: (1) motion picture technologies have intrinsic advantages, (2) separate views on the benefits of film and video continue to exist, and (3) there are emerging issues pertaining to the access and equipment used for motion picture viewing. These main points were discussed through a thematic analysis on the transition of silent educational motion pictures to Youtube.

Despite the high level of novelty of newly emerging media like Youtube, which first appeared in 2005, it cannot be denied that its characteristics still follow the pattern of older forms of motion picture technology. Media, indeed was to some extent, merely renewed or reintroduced in familiar forms (Peters as cited in Snelson & Ross, 2009, p. 2). Thus, as the authors assert, online videos found on the Web like those from Youtube, are undeniably part of the ever-changing educational motion picture technologies or in simple terms, Virtual Learning.

Virtual learning particularly permeated the education sector mainly through sites and channels such as Youtube™ EDU, a central hub for videos featuring the collaboration of leading colleges and universities. Moreover, other sites like SciVee--site containing video and audio for a community of scientists--and Teachertube--designed for K12 students--exist to specially cater academic institutions. In the midst of these arising motion picture technologies in the academe, the authors found it useful to demonstrate how such technologies aid in the learning process of users.

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Firstly, motion picture technologies provided teachers a ‘dynamic representational format’ that enabled them to bring the world closer to their students. As Thomas Edison (as cited in Snelson & Ross, 2009, p. 4) puts it, it is similar to taking the object before the student or taking the student to the object. Second, it sparks excitement among students in the classroom setting, bridging the gap of abstract ideas to reality (Amsden as cited in Snelson & Ross, 2009, p. 5). Thirdly, since videos have the ability to capture and preserve the past, they become the key archives of significant historical events. Next, as the Association for Educational Communications and Technology (as cited in Snelson & Ross, 2009, p. 6) puts it, film captures what are considered to be too slow or too fast to be caught by the human eye. Fifth, with the integration of sound into silent films by the late 1920s, videos brought a special and valuable stimulation to learning.

However, there are yet some who contest the benefits of virtual learning. Their opposition comes from the idea that films and videos would only bring swift delusions and could never fulfill reality (Castro as cited in Snelson & Ross, 2009, p. 10). Moreover, the question as to how, when, and under what conditions education films contribute to learning is still highly debatable. In addition, the so-called Freeman-Commonwealth study showed that films, although highly effective in disseminating information, fail to modify attitudes could have stopped the widespread of a certain disease (Snelson & Ross, 2009, p. 11). Also, films and videos found online were also considered very restrictive since sites like Youtube limit video lengths.

In the final section, the authors asserted that problems relating to video usage arise from the fact that there is a very limited access to appropriate films and videos. Factors that contribute to this problem are the high cost

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associated to purchasing equipment, very little amount of good educational film titles, and the problem on the distribution system. Indeed, as new teaching possibilities start to emerge, new problems also start to surface.

Reference

Snelson, C., & Ross, P. (2009). From silent film to Youtube™: Tracing the historical roots of motion picture technologies in Education. *Journal of Visual Literacy*, 28, 1-27.