

WRITING TODAY: WORD, IMAGE AND TECHNOLOGIES IN EDUCATION

ESCRIBIR HOY: PALABRA, IMAGEN Y TECNOLOGÍAS EN LA EDUCACIÓN

ESCREVER, HOJE: PALAVRA, IMAGEM E TECNOLOGIAS NA EDUCAÇÃO

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Review

“Writing today: word, image and technologies in education”⁴ was written by Ana Elisa Ribeiro, a CEFET-MG professor and researcher specializing in reading, writing, and editing in digital technologies. The book presents a current and relevant approach to issues that go beyond writing, within the context of such digital technologies. In a very accessible language, it creates a theoretical discussion that ties in with the author's practice as a professor and researcher, offering many instances of how technology is used in reading and writing practices.

It is organized into eight chapters and displays the contributions of academics from a variety of fields, such as: Roger Chartier, Maria da Graça Costa Val, Gunther Kress, Magda Soares, Luiz Antônio Marcuschi, Mattoso Camara, Peter Burke and Lúcia Santaella. Certain chapters were based on personal experiences and notes for lectures, which led to studies and, eventually, developed into chapters created through the editing process, as the author explains in this work. The chapters are fundamentally linked to Ana Elisa Ribeiro's teaching experiences.

The first chapter consists of a foreword written by Carla Coscarelli, who provides an inviting introduction to the book, and shares some information about the author's studies and numerous projects, particularly literary compositions. The author is introduced as a renowned expert on books, texts, reading and writing. Throughout the work, the reader is introduced to relevant scientific and academic insights and contributions.

The book begins with a discussion on topics that interest the author, such as digital knowledge and cyberculture. In chapter two - titled *Written, printed, and digital culture - Contiguities and strains*⁵ -, it is made clear that cyberculture has been associated with printed culture; as a result, it has been studied as if it were opposite to written culture, which the author considers to be a misconception, because written culture is linked to the process of invention and evolution of writing over time, as well as the development of reading practices. Ana Elisa proceeds to analyze digital culture and cyberculture, citing academics like Pierre

⁴ “Escrever, hoje: palavra, imagem e tecnologias na educação”. RIBEIRO, Ana Elisa (2018).

⁵ “Cultura escrita, cultura impressa, cultura digital-contiguidades e tensões”.

Lévy, André Lemos, Nelson Pretto, Érick Felinto e Magda Soares. From this outline, Ribeiro (2018) concludes that there is some friction in these authors' perspectives on culture, even though what is discussed is the disappearance of certain technologies due to the emergence of others in this current setting. The author gives three examples of settings with dialogue and tension that took place in Belo Horizonte: a music concert, a library and a publishing company. The first one displays dialogue and tension between two musical spheres, classical and popular (MPB⁶), as shown in an Alceu Valença tour concert in 2012. The tour Valencianas sparked tension between cultures, since Alceu's songs were accompanied by an orchestra, in a location that required the public to remain sat and silent, preventing them from filling the room and dancing, as is customary at an MPB concert. The second example refers to libraries, which are places for studying where silence, organization and attention are valued. However, in Belo Horizonte's public libraries there had been deliberation about incorporating telecentres into these spaces. The conflict lies in this combination, because telecentres are public spaces with the purpose of making information available and enabling communities through technology and this would change how the library operates, as it would go from a quiet to a noisy environment. Lastly, there is the friction between a publishing company's editing process and digital culture, as demonstrated by an example of a printed book publishing company in Minas Gerais. A book containing the accounts of experiences of teachers who used digital tools in their classes was delivered to an editor, and the content included text, images, remixes, screenshots of software, etc.; however, it was suggested during the assessment that the pictures be removed due to copyright regulations. As a result of this issue, what was planned to be a book that promoted the digital activities clashed with the printed book tradition.

The following chapter is quite thought-provoking: “I'll never see a newspaper the same way again - Correlations between reading, editing and learning”⁷. It engages the reader in reflecting on what is read, seen and listened to in various information sharing materials: printed newspapers, radio, and television. Inicially, Ana Elisa relates the editing process to learning, emphasizing that editors' work requires reading and writing practices. One of the

⁶ “Música Popular Brasileira”, or Brazilian Pop Music”.

⁷ “Nunca mais vejo um jornal do mesmo jeito” – *Relações entre leitura, edição e letramento*”.

arguments raised is the non-neutrality of the editing process and how this can go unnoticed by the reader. In addition, reading activities in educational settings seldom take into account criticism of these aspects. The author highlights the importance of understanding how the text was developed until it reached the reader and affirms that this knowledge is an important element of the reading process. The chapter includes relevant examples and analyses of certain news articles, as well as a description of a lesson with a professional in the school context, in which editing was explained from deliberation to publication. After learning about the editing process, a student stated, “I’ll never see a newspaper the same way again”⁸ (p. 38). The work’s usage of examples complements the text in such a way that the reader feels as if they’re living the experience while reading.

The fourth chapter is titled How hundreds of 'digital natives' read 'icons'⁹. The author emphasizes learning as a social activity, correlates visual learning with interpreting images and references Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic studies. The chapter also includes a consideration about one of North American Marc Prensky's writings, in which he defended in 2001 that young people born as of 1980 and 1990 are “digital natives”, while the remainder are “digital immigrants”. The author makes her arguments about these expressions by presenting the points of view of other writers, as well as the findings of a study conducted with young people, which demonstrated the subjects' relationship with the reading of symbols, icons and other aspects related to the graphic interface and, as a result, indicates the need for reading competence, whether for a “digital native” or “immigrant”. Some authors frequently use these expressions, but Ribeiro (2018) provides arguments that allow the reader to analyse how these terminologies are used.

The fifth chapter, “Text & creation, text & action — Books, reading and writing”¹⁰, explores the creative process and is grounded on master's dissertations that examine the topic through a range of mediums, including infographics and illustrations from children's books. The chapter's discussion is enriched when the author showcases characteristics of these works and associates the creative processes with the written word; she also poses

⁸ “Nunca mais vejo um jornal do mesmo jeito”.

⁹ “Como centenas de 'nativos digitais' leem 'ícones’”.

¹⁰ “Palavra & criação, palavra & ação — Livro, leitura e escrita em pauta”.

questions that invite the reader to reflect further. Moreover, the chapter chronicles results of class arguments about aspects of editing, which contribute to illustrating the need for a more accurate account of creativity, invention and the assimilation of studying these processes in school.

Congruent with prior themes, in chapter six, “Technology in education - Questions and challenges for building meaning”¹¹, Ribeiro (2018) emphasizes the importance of technology for life in society, stating that much of what we do today would not be possible without it. According to the author, digital technology in education may allow for a more successful teaching process, due to more appealing resources. It also makes effective use of visuals in texts and their potential for building meaning. In addition, the teacher's role in the selection of appropriate resources and methodology for effective learning is important. This is a critical point in her reasoning.

The concept of semiotic power, as defined by Gunther Kress, is discussed on the following chapter, “Technology and semiotic power - Writing, today”¹². It is known as “the power to deal with the signs”, according to him (RIBEIRO, 2018, p. 83), and it entails assigning meaning to something and making use of various languages. According to Ribeiro, digital technologies have contributed to augmenting this potential by allowing for new reading and writing configurations. In this regard, the chapter recounts the experience of a writing activity enacted with students, which allowed for the observation of how a piece of writing can either educate the reader or not, depending on the way it is assembled and, particularly, if it assimilates different sorts of language.

The author examines the advent of digital technologies in Brazil in the 1990s and their impact on research and education in the eighth chapter, “Digital technology and education - Brief history and six elements for action”¹³. Digital learning, teacher education, software and platform usage, adaptations and challenges all receive immense attention at the time, in addition to the emerging dilemma of non-adherence to digital technologies. The author identifies six elements to reflect and act on in class: the will to learn and the abilities to use,

¹¹ “Tecnologias na educação — Questões e desafios para a produção de sentidos”.

¹² “Tecnologia e poder semiótico- Escrever, hoje”.

¹³ “Tecnologia digital e ensino- Breve histórico e seis elementos para a ação”.

associate, experiment, evaluate and manage work time. The first one concerns the idea of overcoming the “immigrant” stereotype in regard to digital technology, given that the desire to participate in cyberculture and the drive for knowledge have no age restrictions and do not discriminate based on occupation. The second element is user understanding of technology, which is comparable to what the New London Group introduces as one of the principles of multiliteracy pedagogy: “the technical competence” (THE NEW LONDON GRUP - NLG, 1996). The third one, “to associate”, refers to the teacher's ability to use technology to accomplish the goals of their classes. The fourth, “to experiment”, encompasses everything from the assessment of teaching materials and observing their limitations and successes to the adjustments and imitations in new classrooms, which requires experience in education. This element is substantial to “evaluate” the proposition's effects, which the author interprets as a process of self-evaluation with the possibility of renewal. This point of view is very adjacent to the map of multiliteracies pedagogy, which depicts the individual as a “meaning maker” (NLG, 1996). Lastly, the author mentions “time management”, on account of how technology can be used to manage grades, attendance, subjects, among other things.

Finally, despite the material conditions in which the schools are found, the writer maintains in “In conclusion, for the time being”¹⁴ that “what propels this background towards our learning is our curiosity, our mutual instigation. Without it, we could live in a palace and nothing would be of relevance”. Writing is incredibly important in the students' lives, since it is through writing that they will be able to enter society. Therefore, writing has power.

One of the book's contributions is providing examples of practices used by the author with her students, which is a benefit that helps the reader realize the relevance of using technology in the educational context. In addition to that, it alludes to different cultures, displaying the dialogues and tensions in them, and emphasizing the importance of these situations for learning. The book also reflects on the editing process in the classroom, because it is from this perspective that a critical pedagogy ranging from all types of language is possible. And this is the author's main thesis: all technology resources and all types of language can be coordinated in the realm of educational practices.

¹⁴ “Finalizar, por enquanto”.

In conclusion, the book is recommended to any who is interested in learning about technology, reading, semiotics, editing, cyberculture, and digital, written and printed cultures.

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