

Teaching Transmedia journalism in Colombia, a pedagogical experience with university students

Enseñanza del periodismo transmedia en Colombia, una experiencia pedagógica con estudiantes universitarios

Ensino do jornalismo transmídia na Colômbia, uma experiência pedagógica com estudantes universitários

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ABSTRACT | This article socializes the systematization of the pedagogical experience of teaching transmedia journalism based on the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) process, used with journalism students from the Universidad de Bogotá Jorge Tadeo Lozano in 2016 and 2017. In its approach, the students worked on the proposal, research, production and publication of journalistic content, an exercise whose main objective was to facilitate the theoretical and practical understanding of convergent processes, the production of journalistic narratives and interaction with audiences. The systematization is based on the observation of eleven projects in the stages of conceptualization, production of media and content at a narrative and technological level, as well as the management of social networks and the performance of activities in non-digital settings. Likewise, it is based on the assessment of the learning perception given by the students of the project groups. These observations allow us to affirm that PBL is key to achieving meaningful and comprehensive learning; this method develops skills in terms of strategy, technical and journalistic production for the multiplatform, and gives students assets to relate to their audiences. In the same way, it shows that transmedia journalism, from the academy, needs to be complemented and articulated synergistically with other proposals and media training spaces, beyond the classroom. This document provides elements to consider in the configuration of educational strategies in the teaching-learning of transmedia journalism.

KEYWORDS: transmedia journalism; convergent journalism; digital journalism, project-based learning; content generation; storytelling.

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RESUMEN | Este artículo socializa la sistematización de la experiencia pedagógica de la enseñanza del periodismo transmedia con base en el proceso de Aprendizaje Basado en Problemas (ABP), utilizado con estudiantes de periodismo de la Universidad de Bogotá Jorge Tadeo Lozano en los años 2016 y 2017. En su abordaje, los estudiantes trabajaron en la propuesta, investigación, producción y publicación de contenidos periodísticos, un ejercicio que tuvo como objetivo principal facilitar la comprensión teórica y práctica de los procesos convergentes, la producción de narrativas periodísticas y la interacción con las audiencias. La sistematización se sustenta en la observación de once proyectos en las etapas de conceptualización, producción de medios y contenidos a nivel narrativo y tecnológico, así como la gestión de redes sociales y la realización de actividades en escenarios no digitales. Asimismo, se basa en la valoración de la percepción de aprendizaje otorgada por los estudiantes de los grupos de proyecto. Estas observaciones permiten afirmar que el ABP resulta clave para lograr un aprendizaje significativo e integral; este método desarrolla habilidades en materia de estrategia, producción técnica y periodística para la multiplataforma, y otorga a los estudiantes competencias para relacionarse con sus audiencias. Del mismo modo, evidencia que el periodismo transmedia, desde la academia, necesita ser complementado y articulado sinérgicamente con otras propuestas y espacios mediáticos de formación, más allá del salón de clase. Este documento aporta elementos a considerar en la configuración de estrategias educativas en la enseñanza-aprendizaje del periodismo transmedia.

PALABRAS CLAVE: periodismo transmedia; periodismo convergente; periodismo digital; aprendizaje basado en problemas; generación de contenidos; storytelling.

RESUMO | Este artigo socializa a sistematização da experiência pedagógica do ensino do jornalismo transmídia com base no processo de Aprendizagem Baseado em Problemas (ABP), utilizado com estudantes de jornalismo da Universidade de Bogotá Jorge Tadeo Lozano nos anos de 2016 e 2017. Na nossa abordagem, os alunos trabalharam na proposição, pesquisa, produção e publicação de conteúdos jornalísticos, um exercício que teve como objetivo principal facilitar a compreensão teórica e prática dos processos convergentes, a produção de narrativas jornalísticas e a interação com públicos. A sistematização baseia-se na observação de onze projetos nas fases de conceituação, produção de meios e conteúdos a nível narrativo e tecnológico, bem como a gestão de redes sociais e a realização de atividades em contextos não digitais. E, em segundo lugar, na avaliação da percepção da aprendizagem conferida pelos alunos das turmas do projeto. Essas observações que permitem afirmar que a ABP é fundamental para alcançar uma aprendizagem significativa e integral que desenvolva habilidades em termos de estratégia, produção técnica e jornalística para a múltipla-plataforma e na forma como os alunos buscam se relacionar com seus públicos. Da mesma forma, mostra que o jornalismo transmídia, desde a academia, precisa ser complementado e articulado sinérgicamente com outras propostas e espaços de formação midiática fora da sala de aula. Este documento fornece elementos a serem considerados na configuração de estratégias educacionais no ensino-aprendizagem do jornalismo transmídia.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: jornalismo transmídia; jornalismo convergente; jornalismo digital; aprendizagem baseado em problemas; geração de conteúdos; storytelling.

INTRODUCTION

From the second decade of the 21st century, the concepts of media convergence and transmedia storytelling began to gain strength in Colombia as the world and the country underwent important technological changes and, consequently, a significant growth in users connected to the Internet. According to official studies, by 2010 the Colombian population amounted to 45.5 million inhabitants (DANE, 2017), of which 37% were already Internet users (World Bank, 2017). By January 2020, the population increased to 50.6 million, with 69% being users of the network. This means that, in the span of nine years, the number of connected Colombians went from 16.8 million to 35 million, a growth that was notably driven by mobile technology, which in terms of connections versus the total population amounts to 119%, one million more connections compared to January 2019 (Datareportal, 2020). According to the Ministry of Information and Communication Technologies, for the fourth quarter of 2019 the country exceeded 66.2 million subscribers (Mintic, 2020). Datareportal states that users between the ages of 16 and 64 connect to the Internet for more than nine hours a day, of which almost four hours are spent using social media, three and a half hours watching television and another similar amount listening to streaming music. The study shows that YouTube, Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook Messenger, Twitter, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Skype, and Snapchat are the ten most accessed media by Colombian users, respectively (Datareportal, 2020). The First Great ICT Survey/2017 (Mintic, 2017) conducted by the Colombian government—which affirms that 72% of Colombian households managed to access the Internet through a smartphone—determined the practices that connected homes gave to such technologies. In this survey, 94% of households stated that they used the Internet to communicate, 78% to entertain themselves, and 66% to access information. Likewise, 79% use it to access social networks, 70% to use messaging, and 67% to email (Mintic, 2017); Facebook is the most used social media (88%), followed by WhatsApp (87%), Instagram (34%), Google + (29%), and Twitter (20%).

This increasingly diverse and busy media ecosystem made the processes of convergence in the multiplatform and the proliferation of new forms of transmedia narrative production even more evident. This has motivated the academy to deepen the understanding of the phenomenon through recent bibliography, casuistic analysis, debate, and experimentation with this narrative in the field of non-fiction on current issues, so that it can be shared in the classroom with students. Thus, the question that mobilized this exercise is how to configure and shape the learning process of university students in journalism, transmedia, and the development of instrumental production skills, through real journalistic experiences, understanding this also as learning by solving social problems, whose production of meaning is subject to the rules of the current media and narrative ecosystem.

Therefore, we sought to understand, from a digital communication approach, the convergent processes and the aspects that characterize the transmedia narrative as a task that implies reflecting on and analyzing the role played by information and communication technologies (ICTs) as an instrumental support that dynamizes and accentuates these processes. Although the transmedia narrative has as its starting point stories generated from any media platform, that correspond to the nature of the subject from which the proposal was worked, the programmatic content (Moreno, 2012) aimed at the construction of a hypermedia narrative articulated around a website that would function as a content concentration point and as one way, among several, of approaching the transmedia journalistic project.

To contribute to the training process under the aforementioned conditions, we decided to approach a Problem-Based Learning (PBL) didactic, which articulates theoretical conceptualization, instrumental appropriation, narrative construction, and content management. Consequently, this academic exercise evidences the experimentation of a comprehensive pedagogical methodology to strengthen the students' professional skills relevant to the media and the labor context of today's world. Therefore, the research applies the systematization of educational experiences to recover the lived experience, represented in new knowledge that allows the academic proposal to be developed and structured more efficiently; likewise, it seeks to contribute more elements to the academic community that teaches in this area of knowledge, and has been relevant to develop the convergent component in the program's new curriculum.

According to the above, this work shows, firstly, the theoretical bases that allow us to understand the conceptual scenario in the relationship between convergence, transmedia, and journalism. At a methodological level, it breaks down and explains the stages that were used as a model to configure the course of a transmedia production from the classroom. In the same vein, it details the axes on which the experience systematization is concentrated. It also presents the results of the work conducted by the students, sharing the main aspects found in them, which allow observing the fulfillment of the learning objectives and the students' evaluation and perception of the process.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Transmedia journalism and Problem-Based Learning (PBL)

Media convergence processes (Jenkins, 2008) present in the current media ecosystem (Scolari, Manuel, & Mar, 2012) give rise to different narrative forms, such as crossmedia (Costa & Piñeiro, 2012) and transmedia (Scolari, 2013) constructions, narratives that are also influenced by the growing participatory culture that develops in the aforementioned ecosystem (Aparici, García-Marín, & Díaz-Delgado, 2019).

According to the sources, transmedia narratives (Scolari, 2016) can be understood as those stories that are told through different media and platforms, using different media configurations of a digital or analog nature, or both, where the audience plays an important role as a creative force (López-Carril, Villamón-Herrera, & Añó-Sanz, 2019) and, therefore, co-author the narrative universe to the extent that it is the receivers, in their active condition, who have the capacity to generate new expansions to the main story.

This active condition dynamizes the relationship between all the actors, giving rise to collaborative processes, either to improve the network, to participate in its construction or, specifically, to connect with the technical, professional, and conceptual world of journalism and the media, simultaneously achieving the visibility and empowerment of these people and the organizations they represent (Camargo, Vieira Miranda, & Magnon, 2019). Therefore, one way of understanding transmedia journalism is as a form of language composed of other languages and narratives (Renó & Flores, 2018) generated by journalists and people or groups interested in contributing their information and insights to the other audiences. It can be understood as a construction of stories without a single production agenda, with a common purpose that consists of contributing and sharing what is of public interest due to its novel, human, or unusual nature.

These are the participatory culture new generations of information consumers (Scolari & Establés, 2017), who do not conform with what is given to them, but rather take on the task of exploring, hunting, and collecting data in a more committed way, connecting elements that were not fully or partially addressed by the initial author. It is a new relationship that has been able to show that the journalistic exercise is undergoing important changes and that new forms of interaction are generated between the journalist, the media, and the audience (Rost & Bergero, 2012): it is not a simple exposure of news, but the establishment of new rules that recover and privilege the different interaction forms.

The above implies that the teaching of transmedia journalism requires exploring and experimenting with new methodologies and forms of creation, which prospect —and practice on— the realities of such media diversity, its narrative compositions, and the characteristics of the subject that inhabits and shares the current media ecosystem. The foregoing is aimed at training journalism students to use their strategic and executive capacity as creators and managers of journalistic experiences. The subject of transmedia is the prosumer (Sarsa, 2014), who has an active condition of consumer, collaborator, and producer of content through digital technologies based mainly on Web 2.0, enabled for the creation, editing, publication, and management of content among all members of the media circuit.

Considering the above, the journalist, as a transmedia producer, must understand that his/her creative work does not fall only on the medium and narrative style that he/her imprints on his/her content, but must also propose the design of integral experiences with which the message has to be revealed to the audience (Pratten, 2015). Thus, the pertinent and strategic use of each content must be considered according to the platform, the interactivity planned for its target audiences, its maturation stages, and the results measurement in each of them (Vázquez-Herrero, González-Neira, & Quintas-Froufe, 2019).

Thus, it is important that journalistic experiences can propose ways in which their consumers can expand the narrative, cause immersion, and inspire action, among other characteristics (Scolari, 2013; Nieto, 2017). As a whole, and without intending to condition the transmedia narrative composition in any way, the main interest lies in managing to summon the participation of the audience and challenge its creative capacity.

That is why this pedagogical proposal aims to face the current media reality challenges in the field of journalism. Thus, the design of the course structured an academic space for reflection and practice, to allow the student to understand the media historical moment and, in turn, develop the professional skills required by the labor world in the matter, from a harmonic curriculum which intertwines theory and practice to give solution to the situation's communicational and social problems.

This seek to strengthen what is known as media competence (Pérez-Rodríguez, 2020), a concept that implies overcoming the basic idea of instrumentalization or simple decoding by promoting other capacities that guarantee media reading and writing processes, in broader semiotic and pragmatic contexts, especially cultural and of social interaction, involving different skills and forms of literacy.

Consequently, the Problem-Based Learning model (Méndez Urresta, Méndez Urresta, & Méndez Carvajal, 2017) is applied as a viable didactic strategy for the student to obtain the knowledge and expertise proposed by the course. Also known as PBL, this model allows to face in an innovative and interactive way the resolution of complex problems of reality (Casa, Huatta, & Mancha, 2019) from an academic environment through a work project in which the work groups define a topic, pose questions, debate them, collect data, analyze it, reflect on their learning, and generate conclusions and products to later socialize them.

PBL is viable to teach transmedia journalism, to the extent that the student achieves greater emotional motivation, retains knowledge in a better way, stimulates creative critical thinking, increases interpersonal skills, promotes formative evaluation and, above all, within the framework of his/her class project,

achieves greater knowledge integration by identifying in his/her proposal the different theories, disciplines, components, processes, and procedures of its development (Luy-Montejo, 2019).

In this exercise, the students can obtain significant learning, understood as the successful integration of new knowledge in their cognitive structure (Carranza & Caldera, 2018) in the midst of a dynamic that invites them to work collaboratively as a team, to assume responsibilities, to face challenges, to exploit their creative potential, to develop critical and communicative capacity, to experiment with the objects of study, and to connect the academy with reality, encouraging them to decide how they will obtain answers for the solution of the problems raised (Maldonado-Pérez, 2008).

According to the above, PBL involves rethinking traditional learning dependent on memory and repetition since it connects the student with the adoption of an interdisciplinary and cooperative approach to address social complexities; in practice, it invites them to increase their involvement with the environment and, consequently, to persevere in achieving their interests. Finally, it must be said that PBL has already been tested and promoted for the training of journalists, particularly in cyberjournalism, where the results have been satisfactory and new proposals are posited to work cooperatively from different cultural and educational contexts (Larrondo et al., 2020).

METHODOLOGY

This research is qualitative and applies the systematization of educational experiences (Bermúdez, 2018) as a methodology that tends to produce knowledge in a permanent and cumulative manner, based on the recovery, reconstruction, and analysis of experiences lived in the interventions conducted on a social reality – in this case, the process of training students in transmedia journalism – to rescue and share its most relevant and significant aspects.

The pedagogical strategy was articulated through PBL didactics. It proposed to the students of the subject Communication and New Technologies II, of the Universidad de Bogotá Jorge Tadeo Lozano Social Communication - Journalism Program, belonging to the cohorts of the 2016 second semester to the 2017 second one, to propose and define a transmedia journalistic project. This would lead to a three-stage process: conceptualization, media and journalistic content creation, and content management in social media. Based on this, a proposal was built from the field of digital communication as an approach to the generation of transmedia journalism content within the framework of the creative and multifaceted processes of convergence (Villanueva-Mansilla, 2017).

Course structure within the PBL framework

The pedagogical proposal that integrates PBL in the course was made up of three stages that, in a period of 16 weeks, with a parallel development and to a different degree, combined theory and practice. The project articulated within the framework of this pedagogical proposal was conceived so that the student would have the capacity to develop strategic thinking to be able to structure a transmedia narrative (multiplatform), which would urge the audiences to achieve greater involvement, to practice the reporting and conceptual production of journalistic content, and to explore and appropriate Web 2.0 applications aimed at creating, editing, publishing, and managing content on websites and in social media.

Stage 1. Conceptualization

An approximation to the definition, characterization, and recognition of the current media ecosystem, as well as to the media convergence processes in their different dimensions, was made from convergence theory; the different narrative forms present in this scenario were identified, specifically those corresponding to journalism. A theoretical approach was conducted based on basic bibliographic material that allowed students to complement the concepts delivered in class.

In the practical component of this stage, students dedicated most of their autonomous work at home to prepare the thematic proposal of a journalistic project. The theme had to be limited and with the possibility of easily accessing sources and locations. To present their proposals, the students developed a format that contained: their product provisional title, the theme problematic situation, the hypothesis about its causes or repercussions in the social sphere, their interest or motivation to work on it, and the audience that would receive the or benefit from the information. Likewise, they had to indicate the reasons that justified the journalistic investigation, based on the Journalistic Added Value criteria (Pellegrini, Puente, Porath, Mujica, & Grassau, 2011) such as its relevance, status of those involved, number of involved or affected, geographic proximity, rarity of the case, or its degree of human factor.

At this point, the students submitted a first proposal of relevant or suitable sources —because of their character, credibility, responsibility, or direct involvement in the events— capable of accounting for the problem and showing diversity of points of view, and they made a brief survey —state of the art— on what had been published in the media about it.

The group proposal was socialized in an editorial board made up of classmates. The document was immediately adjusted, based on the teacher's feedback and the contributions of classmates, to then begin the reporting activities and recording of material for the preparation of the main piece (audiovisual, sound, or textual report).

Stage 1 Weeks 1 to 5	Stage 2 Weeks 6 to 10	Stage 3 Weeks 11 to 16
Subject proposition. Editorial board approval. Journalistic investigation. Multimedia record.	Generation of a main journalistic piece, in audiovisual or sound format, of short duration, with diverse sources, which manages to account for the central investigation problem. Website creation. Edition of multimedia contents. Social media post.	Content management in social media (social network or microblog). Conducting activities with audiences in physical settings.

Table 1. Activities scheduled for each stage of the project

Source: Own elaboration.

Evaluation criteria	Theoretic	Practice	Evaluation	Academic weeks	Project
Conceptualization Theories of digital technology and the convergent phenomenon	Transmedia convergence Transmedia journalism	Proposal of a journalistic theme Conception of a transmedia project	Conceptual appropriation Project approval First reporting progress	1	Conception
				2	
				3	
				4	
Production Conceptual and instrumental appropriation for the creation of narratives.	Web 2.0 Social media and tools		Website creation Cross-platform content creation	5	Investigation and material recording
				6	
	Project content production laboratory	Web content delivery	7	Editing	
			8		
			9		
Management Conceptual and instrumental appropriation to manage content in networks and conducting activities in physical spaces.	Plan of action in networks and physical spaces		Network management Activities in physical spaces	10	Corrections
				11	
	Platform pieces creation Content management Management and measuring Audiences Participation			12	Management
				13	
				14	
				15	
		16	Socialization		

Figure 1. Course programmatic synthesis

Source: Own elaboration.

Stage 2. Media production and journalistic content

In a second stage, the students had to recognize the means and tools of Web 2.0, know their uses, functionalities, and contributions to the digital narrative to channel their contents elaboration. The students of the group worked on the contents in class with teacher supervision and complemented it at home as part of their autonomous work. At the end of the stage, the working group delivered a website containing the investigation.

Stage 3. Social media management

Preliminarily, the students worked on the concept of social networks and virtual communities that operate through different social media. In practice, the management of networks and communities aims to specify the target audience identified in the initial stage of the project and develop an action plan to intervene in the networks to attract these audiences and achieve different forms of interaction with the content and between all community members. This implied the creation of additional pieces to promote the proposal.

Experience systematization

The experience systematization established two axes as an observation point: observation of the projects in each of the stages and assessment of the learning perception of eleven project groups that developed their proposals until their completion and answered the learning perception survey.

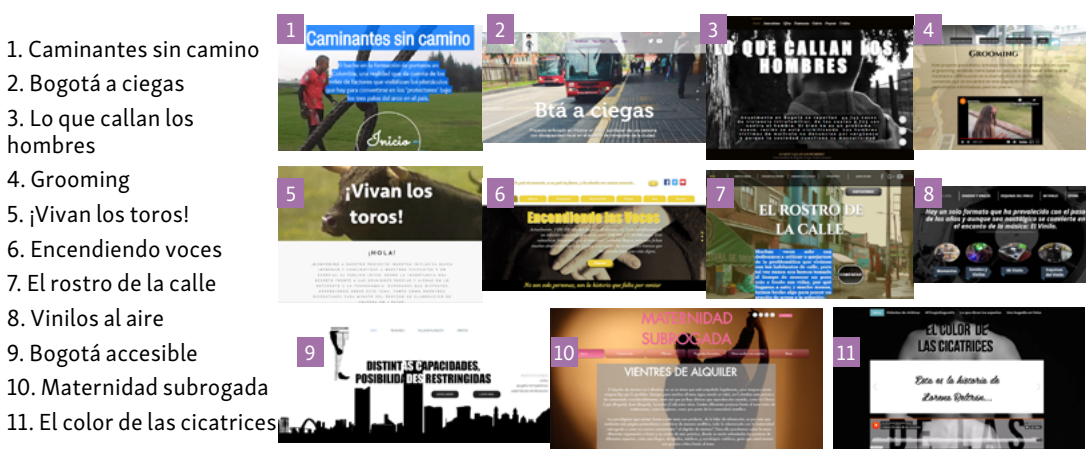


Figure 2. Projects developed by students (2016-2017)

Source: Own elaboration.

Observation of projects developed by students

The reconstruction of the experience began with the technical on-screen documentary review of the final product delivered by the students, presenting it as a valuable source of information for understanding the phenomenon studied (Hernández-Sampieri, 2014). To consolidate the background record of the final material delivered, a data collection form was prepared. To analyze it, the categories were defined by stages. The code sheet was structured as follows:

- Basic information: job title and data of the members.
- Conceptualization: identification of theoretical concepts reflected in the configuration of the transmedia proposal, the proposal of the journalistic topic, and the structural configuration of the media proposal.

- **Media production:** considers the web creation as the main and integrating medium of the project, as well as the pieces that were developed to articulate the story.
- **Content and audience management:** considers the proposals and results of the strategies used by students in digital and physical media to engage audiences.

Assessment of student learning perception

The data for this point was obtained through a survey applied by a Google form to the members of the working groups. The link was shared from September 27, 2018, to January 13, 2019, and was answered by 17 students, out of a total of 45, members of the 11 work groups presented in this article. In this survey, there were five assessment questions clusters with a score from zero (minimum) to five (maximum), plus an open question (table 2).

RESULTS

Project observation

The transmedia journalistic projects developed by the students showed an interest in addressing real and current problems to understand their nature and impact to generate content that helps to provide more elements for reflection. In line with the theoretical approaches, they proposed pertinent investigative, media, and multiplatform structures, viable to manage the content and their narratives, as well as the social media through which they would seek to circulate their messages and activities to be carried out with their nascent communities.

The way in which the story would be articulated through such media and platforms was the aspect that generated the most uncertainty given the wide diversity of media, languages, and narrative tactics, and their connection possibilities to articulate the journalistic approach. Raising project ideas in the framework of an editorial board with classmates and the teacher helped to specify the research topic from a very early stage of the course, and to establish organization and production routines among the groups. After this first presentation in the editorial council, all the proposals were submitted to corrections.

In the media production stage, the students theoretically and practically approached the means and tools of Web 2.0 for the generation of content and its management in social networks. In the workshops, they recognized the instruments and worked on creating new accounts for their project, where they identified their narrative potential and the possibility of editing, publishing, and sharing.

Questions clusters	Question to assess from zero (0) to five (5)
I. Theoretical component: Do you consider that the theoretical component of Communication and New Technologies II course allowed you?:	1. Understand the concepts of technology and convergence. 2. Understand the concept and characteristics of transmedia storytelling. 3. Recognize concepts through case studies. 4. Design a transmedia journalistic project based on the theory and the cases studied.
II. Content creation: Do you consider that the practical component oriented to the creation of subject contents of CNT II allowed you to:	5. Explore the different types of Web 2.0 social media, their characteristics and uses. 6. Understand the narrative potential of the different means and tools of Web 2.0. 7. Practice producing websites and creating multimedia content through different Web 2.0 tools. 8. Make appropriate use of the media to tell stories based on theoretical concepts. 9. Acquire the ability to use any means of Web 2.0 to generate journalistic media and content.
III. Social media content management: Do you consider that the practical component oriented to content management in social networks through social media of the CNT II course allowed you to:	10. Identify and practice ways of attracting audiences through social media. 11. Identify and practice ways of engaging audiences through social media. 12. Identify and practice forms of involvement (participation-action) in physical media.
IV. Contributions of the course to your training as a journalist: Do you consider that the subject of Communication and New Technologies II allowed you to:	13. Approach a practice of journalism and production forms from the transmedia narrative. 14. Recognize and apply different convergence strategies and narrative techniques to apply to journalism. 15. Contribute to the understanding and solution of social problems. 16. Strengthen your journalistic skills. 17. Strengthen your instrumental skills based on Web 2.0. 18. Strengthen your ability to work in a team.
V. Contributions	19. What recommendations would you make to this course to strengthen the teaching process?

Table 2. Questions from the student learning perception survey

Source: Own elaboration.

At the website level, in the initial versions, the most recurrent problems among the students had to do with the configuration of site's general structure and with the narrative connection of the contents complementary to the main piece. It was detected that, in general, the content proposal lacked further development, which suggests that it is necessary to delve into a user experience production discipline (Garrett, 2011) in the stage that defines and prepares the content to be published.

In the sites production, it was observed that the quality of the multimedia material collected –coming from mobile devices and sensitively dependent on the recording conditions–, the techniques used, and the editing processes seriously affected the readability and credibility of the content. Therefore, it is imperative in future experiences to implement practice sessions in the field with sources, locations, and technical resources, to mitigate technical inconveniences and thus improve quality. Another common error detected was the students' tendency to choose tools and narrative forms that are not relevant to the type of material collected, and vice versa, favoring in most cases the gimmicky capacity of the interactive medium over the narrative potential. Therefore, it is necessary for students to have access to reference cases that allow them to have greater criteria and certainty.

As the website had to be the main medium of the journalistic experience, articulating the different themes, narratives, and experiences with the audience, it is not surprising that Wix and Webby have been some of the most used 2.0 site creation tools. YouTube was used to articulate the report as the main narrative in eight of the products. However, it was also used to add testimonials, records of activities conducted in physical spaces with audiences, and to create specific content to share on social networks. Some cases used it to create clips that raised questions that were resolved through testimonials.

The TimelineJS tool —developed by the Knight Foundation— to build hypermedia chronologies was used without major inconvenience from a technical point of view, but it did show the need to work more with the student on the potential and pertinent use of this narrative. This, since in some cases the temporal component was neglected and ended up turning the proposal into a sequence of disjointed contents, and because the graphical user interface could have been better used. Similarly, the use of JuxtaposeJS, for the interactive superimposition of images, evidenced the need to exploit more the comparative capacity of images on the same plane to have the opportunity to contrast and appreciate the changes, differences, and similarities between the before and after in graphic context. The simplicity of this functionality demands greater image treatment and precision.

StoryMapJS, as a hypermedia story that proposes sequential georeferencing, was applied correctly in some cases under the route or itinerary modality and, in other cases, underutilized to make simple references that could be treated with a conventional map. The georeferencing of Google Maps was recurrent in the projects and focused on the personalization of maps with markers that indicated establishments or affected areas in relation to their themes. Its deployment, however, could have been more prominent in the interface space to improve the

query field, and to exploit its potential by implementing personalized markers with multimedia content that would provide more informative elements, or with a better titling and description.

Playbuzz was employed to provide an interactive trivia game where the user is challenged to answer questions online about the content exposed in the main narrative. The implementation of Soundcloud was also identified, which had three specific uses: in the first case, aimed to make an audio story; in the second, to present complementary testimonies at different points in the narrative, and, in the third, as short podcasts, which were also broadcast on the university's virtual radio station. Something similar happened with Spreaker, which was used exclusively for the presentation of a podcast series. Piktochart and Infogram were platforms used to display infographics that synthesize figures obtained from studies conducted by official or academic sources, as a resource to improve understanding. Although they represent an aid in the design, the features of the predefined models on the platforms lead to the essence of the information being lost, because the templates are not aesthetically personalized to respond to the project theme. Therefore, it is essential to reflect on the use, relevance, and contribution of these models in relation to the content.

The social media Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram were added as a link and in specific cases to incorporate content created by audiences. Regarding the third stage, related to content management in social media, the students developed activities of attraction and involvement through social media and in physical spaces, in most cases in an articulated manner (exclusively in the social media, exclusively in the physical setting, or in a combined way between analog and digital).

The management of social media was conducted to promote the formation and revitalization of virtual communities, with the goal of seeking audience participation through the different forms of interaction provided by such media. The strategies resulted in a planned exercise, whose main actions were the periodic delivery of new multimedia material to keep the user updated, presenting related information, or project progresses. On the other hand, digital leaders and organizations crucial to the themes developed were invited to become followers, multipliers, allies, or active participants in the community.

The community was also asked questions or surveys and was invited to attend scheduled activities and encouraged to recommend the site to increase its outreach. Depending on the theme and the target audiences, the groups tried to urge the audiences to action, organizing traditional or disruptive activities to bring them closer to the problem. Some of these were open-air recitals, public debates in the auditorium, games, social experiments, artistic creation such as murals or

drawings on paper, or reconnaissance tours. In some cases, these activities were announced through social networks, which were also an instrument to enhance participation, among other practices.

Results of the student assessment survey regarding the course development

With a score of 4.4 out of 5, equivalent to 88% acceptance of the theoretical component of the course, the students considered that it allowed them to understand the concept and characteristics of transmedia storytelling. With the same score, they stated that they had understood the concepts of technology and convergence and that, based on this, it had been possible to design a transmedia journalistic project. With a score of 4.1 (82%), they described having recognized the concepts through the case study. Regarding the practical component, with a score of 4.1, the students affirm that it was possible to explore the different types of social means of Web 2.0. With 4.2 points, they state that they understood the narrative potential of the different means and tools of Web 2.0. With a score of 4.4, they stated that they had had the opportunity to practice the production of websites and the creation of multimedia content through different Web 2.0 tools. To the same degree, they consider that they have made pertinent use of the media to tell stories, based on theoretical concepts and, in the same way, managed to acquire the competence to use any Web 2.0 mean to generate journalistic and media content.

Regarding the content management work on social networks, the students scored with 4.0 the fact of been able to identify and practice ways of attracting audiences to their networks. They valued with 4.1 having been able to identify and practice ways of involving them in their proposed activities, and with 3.9, having involved (convened) them to physical spaces. On the subject, the students give a score of 4.3 for the contribution that this subject had by allowing them to approach the practice of journalism and the transmedia narrative forms of production. With 4.6, they affirm that it allowed them to recognize and apply different strategies and narrative convergence techniques to apply to journalism. With ratings of 4.1 and 4.2 respectively, the course also allowed them to make their contributions to the understanding and solution of social problems and strengthen their journalistic skills. Likewise, with a score of 4.3, they expressed that this approach allowed them to strengthen their instrumental skills based on Web 2.0 and their ability to work as a team.

Regarding the fifth part of the instrument, where the students were invited to make their contributions to improve the teaching process, they expressed positive aspects and others that should be considered to improve the PBL proposal. In the first place, they see the pedagogical proposal as complete and pertinent, with the accompaniment being important to fulfill the objective. They consider that the methodology that integrates theory and practice was sufficient and served

to give impetus to the project, giving them the ability to recognize and apply different communication strategies. Likewise, they assure that the subject puts their creativity to the test when carrying out the project and transforming it into transmedia, and they see it as a good exercise that provides a lot of experience for professional life. However, some of the students draw attention to the theoretical component, which they find excessive and monotonous when approached in the first stage; they see it as counterproductive regarding the application times of the concept to the product and its management, for which they suggest that this theoretical stage be readjusted and more connected to their projects. In addition, they raise the need to have more casuistic references that allow them to outline and enrich their proposals. As for the practical side, the students consider it important that the instrumental appropriation is also conducted from the beginning of the course and not only with the proposals from Web 2.0, but also with the desktop applications used by companies. They feel that it is important that content production is increased during class hours and involves them more with their environment. Likewise, they want to go deeper into the strategic field, as well as in the promotion of their products to make them known. They particularly seek to focus on under pressure work, to mimic a real work environment, because they identify that the media form of production is accelerated and requires the greatest and best reaction capacity on the part of the professional.

DISCUSSION

In general terms, the results of the experience indicate that the PBL is a key pedagogical instrument for the teaching of Transmedia Journalism, which allowed the course structure to meet the objectives of promoting a better process and significant learning experience for students. This suggests that this proposal continue to be developed in the future and that the respective methodological adjustments be made to optimize the process and increase the knowledge, motivation, and level of expertise to conduct their work.

The projects configuration shows that proposing a multiplatform system to tell a story is not, in principle, a difficult task, but that it does imply extensive knowledge of the media and narratives and, above all, a great creative and reasoned effort to put together the stories in the media circuit while maintaining the audience's attention and participation.

In terms of technical production, the learning of the instruments is fast, but requires more work regarding the content concept, since it is evident that in some cases the instrumental appropriation is good and clear, but its content is deficient and deviated from its purpose or narrative function. This suggests that

there should be a precedent that strengthens the aesthetic and communication criteria of transmedia journalists from the earliest stages of the training. Although the feedback from the students was positive, it is also clear that there are many fronts to cover to arrive at the type of knowledge, skill, and product that the participants hope to learn to do. That is why this exercise must permanently record the initiatives, good practices, or complex situations that lead to implement improvements to the pedagogical proposal.

As of the date of publication of this article, the subject has not been advanced due to the updating of the study plan. However, the configuration and background of the Communication and New Technologies II class built the current programmatic content of the first of two subjects of Convergence in the Program of Social Communication - Journalism of the University of Bogotá Jorge Tadeo Lozano.

CONCLUSIONS

As can be seen from the proposed pedagogical initiative and the experience presented here, it can be concluded that the training of transmedia journalists within the framework of the Problem-Based Learning model allows significant learning to be obtained. This is so to the extent that the student has, at each stage of the project, to challenge his/her thinking and doing to build a work with the necessary elements that allow to tell stories and attract audiences, facing and understanding since the beginning the challenges that Rost and Bergero (2012) posit for journalism in the convergent field.

It is also clear that transmedia journalism is not resolved only with bibliographical or masterful approaches, but it is necessary for the students to exercise the conception, structuring, and execution of narrative projects to consolidate useful knowledge for their working life. This work will be better if the topics to be discussed are of interest to the students and have a clear social purpose.

In the midst of the complexity of the convergent context, the task of the teacher must be as committed as that of his/her students, since, in his/her work as a guide, advisor, and critic, he/she must channel ideas and bring theory to concrete facts, as well as draw the attention of the working groups to the possibilities, opportunities, strategies, instruments, and good productive practices to give consistency to the proposals.

For the development of transmedia journalistic projects, in addition to recognizing the media ecosystem explained by Carlos Scolari (2013), it is essential to come into direct contact with the media that comprise it and understand in detail, through practice, its dynamics and particularities to establish relationships

—synergies— between each of them, reducing the level of fragmented and disconnected constructions. This also means delving into the details of the narrative possibilities that each medium allows.

It is of great value that the students have had, previously or in parallel, the opportunity to develop the production of journalistic, audiovisual, digital, and sound narratives, since knowledge in these areas facilitates the production and editing process of the projects. In accordance with the above, it is important to urge that these productions be connected and actively support in an environment such as a laboratory or productive unit, so that students have an additional scenario – outside the classroom– to give continuity to the development of their projects and that their autonomous work is conducted in a suitable environment. This would be a scenario that, in addition, could provide the students with more instruments for the fulfillment of their objectives.

It is important to point out that transmedia journalistic production continues to be a field under construction, highly changing, that does not have exact formulas or specific ingredients. Each proposal is a new and unique experience, defined according to the theme, the characteristics of its audiences, budgets, etc., and particularly what is to be obtained from them. In any of its configurations, the proposals represent for its participants an exercise that demands a lot of knowledge, creativity, coordination, and work discipline.

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