Innovative Teaching and Digital Literacy in Preschool. App Content Analysis and Experimental Case Studies in a Sociological Perspective

# Details

## Year

2018

## Issued

2018

## Language

English

## Volume

10

## Issue

2

## Start Page

## End Page

## Authors

Cortoni I.;Lo Presti V.

## Type

Journal article

## Journal

Italian Journal of Sociology of Education

## Topics

## Sample

400 educational apps for preschoolers of which four were the focus of this paper
teachers attending co-desing meeting to implement the preschool curriculum with similar apps

## Implications For Educators About

Professional development

# Abstract

The objective of this article is to illustrate, from the theoretical and methodological perspective, the construction of an experimental process of a “digital education app” in several preschools in the municipality of Rome. The general objective the project fits into is related to a sociological analysis, based on the relationship between theory and empirical research, of the effects of introducing digital media into preschool didactics. Preschools are a privileged site for observing and analyzing the formation and development of children’s capabilities (Nussbaum, 2000), since the plasticity of the child’s thought begins to be configured as early as preschool and evolves progressively taking into account the perceptive, sociocultural and behavioural conditions emerging from different educational agencies (Piaget, Inhelder, 1950). The article refers to the research project of the Mediamonitor Minori Observatory of the Sapienza University of Rome entitled “Media Usage in Pre-school. Analysis and Evaluation of the Influence of Digital Media on the Socialization of Children between 0-6”. The article retraces in particular the stages of the research strategy designed to structure a formative, experimental protocol to be experimented in some case studies in Rome and illustrates the main results.

# Outcome

"The results of the research may be referred
to the two main actions: the content analysis app and the experimentation
with integrating the apps into the teaching.
In the first case, the analysis was done starting from the most popular
apps in the market store, not necessarily for didactic/educational purposes.
Overall, about 400 apps designed for children “under 6” were analyzed, and
may be categorized1 as follows:
Baby talk apps (171 apps, 47%), for children 2-3 years of age. These apps
have a basic narrative and graphic interface structure with a low degree
of interactivity and usability, but with just as little orientation towards the
commercial and marketing side.
• User friendly apps (146 apps, 40.1%), for children 4-5 years of age. These
apps focus on the user’s psycho-emotional and cognitive-behavioural
characteristics. This central importance can be seen in a number of aspects:
in the lack of brands and advertising, showing an attention to protecting
the minor; in the strong usability of the interface combined with
the food level of interactivity and multimediality; and in the constant
presence of a navigation guide, at any rate letting the child understand
the virtual presence of a guardian.
• Marketing apps (47 apps, 12.9%), for children 6-7 years of age. These apps
are more oriented towards commercial objectives. In this sense, a central
role is played by brand and advertising in these apps, while attention to
the interface’s interactivity, multimediality, and usability is of secondary
importance.
[...] In the second case, the integration of apps into teaching was done in a
manner complementary to the didactic objectives, the tools, and the materials
already used by the educators in the classroom on a daily basis, so as to
guarantee educational continuity for the child’s psycho-emotional equilibrium.
[...] In light of the initial results of the pilot study, in may be stated that the
incidence of digital didactics within an experimental protocol appears more
evident with children who show lower levels of competence at the start of
the path.
Both fields of experience at the end of the experimentation path were
acquired better by the children in the experimental group than the control
group."
(Cortoni Lo Presti, 2018, pp. 50-51)