2017

The New Media of Mass Communication and Application of New Technologies in the Drama Curriculum for the "Voice Technique" Course

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Abstract: *Integration of new mass media and new technologies facilitates and enriches the teaching of Voice Technique course. Some of the new educational "tools" that enhance teaching are: computers, mobile phones (android), lap-tops, iPod, iPads, tablets. New media used in teaching are: social networks, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram; vlogs, such as YouTube and search engines, such as Google. The teaching process uses new channels of communication, such as Skype, Viber, Messenger and WhatsApp. During the Voice Technique course, the drama students are first being introduced to the anatomy and physiology of the vocal apparatus, and in further education they gradually fall within the scope of musical theatre. The course is mainly based on oral lectures and demonstrations by educators. Photos and video clips which can be found on the Internet are of great significance. They can be recorded using new technologies and shared using social networks and communication channels.*

Keywords: *new media of mass communication, social networking, students of acting, voice techniques.*

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INTRODUCTION

During the last decade, the use of new media of mass communication and new technologies has increased significantly and found its place in the educational system in addition to traditional ways of learning. The datum from 2013 indicates that social media and websites for sharing information, such as *Facebook, YouTube* and *Twitter*, are among the most visited sites on the Internet. More than 1.8 billion visitors were recorded that year (Lawler, 2012; Facebook, 2013; Bernhardt et al., 2013). Since then, their use has expanded even more and the number of visitors has increased.

The integration of new media and technology makes the learning process easier, and it enriches and brings diversity in education. Today's *Net Generation* students have access to sophisticated new technologies, and it could be said that the digital language is now language that facilitates communication. Their "native" language is the language of computers, video games and the Internet (Prensky, 2006). Some of the new educational "tools" that enhance teaching are: computers, mobile phones (android OS), laptops, iPods, iPads, tablets. The new media of mass communication that are used in the teaching are: social networks such as *Facebook, Twitter, Instagram*; vlogs, such as *YouTube* and search engines such as *Google*. The teaching process uses new channels of communication, such as *Skype, Viber, Messenger* and *WhatsApp*.

1. **Acting and new technologies**

Although acting requires the "analogue" approach, new technologies are greatly helpful when it comes to acquiring new knowledge. The question is, how can new media contribute to the improvement of the Voice Technique course?

As a part of the Voice Technique course, drama students are first introduced to the anatomy and physiology of the vocal apparatus. Vocal apparatus, that is, the human voice is the oldest hidden instrument. Given the fact that the process of creating the voice is not visible with the naked eye, having photos and video clips from *YouTube* and *Google* is of great significance, mainly because of the structure of the classes which is based on the oral presentations and demonstrations by educators. Furthermore, these photos and video clips can be downloaded from the *YouTube* and *Google* and used online and offline.

In further education, according to the curriculum, drama students gradually fall within the scope of musical theatre. In most cases, students do not have a formal, classical education, consequently the songs from different musicals are taught by ear (and not by using the musical texts, i.e. score). Having said all this, the new technology and new media in the classrooms and outside the classrooms are of great help in mastering the material, and providing a self-assessment during the semester and beyond.

For example, mobile phones can be used in several ways: demonstrations of individual recordings of songs of other artists, audio or audio-visual *InVivo* recording during classes (thus we can indicate the positive and negative elements after recording) by doing this students themselves are involved in the analysis, thus they become self-assessors. Recordings can be analyzed in the context of teaching with educators outside the class, and with peers. In addition, through social networks (e.g. *Facebook*), students can form groups and discuss, exchange ideas, educational materials and forward content related material to specific performances- concerts, shows- with the possibility of including the lecturers. The task of an educator is to select and offer adequate facilities, to arouse interest about the initiatives, to instruct students to independently research and develop inventiveness, creativity and aesthetic experience.

2. Using the video clips in the classroom

Over the past decades, the studies on multimedia strategies in education have been accumulated. The term *Multimedia* refers to the presentation of the material in two forms: audio-verbal and visual-illustrative form (Mayer, 2001; Berk, 2009). Multimedia incentives contribute to the memory improvement and facilitate the adoption and understanding of the course materials. Using video clips within the teaching process represents the most appropriate, the most useful and most important teaching tool for learning and mastering the complex educational content.

The value of the use of video clips is manifested in several ways: it attracts the students' attention, increases their concentration, prepares and facilitates the implementation of the exercises, stirs the imagination, enhances and accelerates the process of learning, connects students with other students and teachers, improves memory, affects the understanding of the material, inspires and motivates students, makes learning fun, gives the possibility of expressing oneself freely, reduces the feeling of insecurity and anxiety when processing new and unknown educational materials.

Video clips have a strong influence on the human brain and senses. While watching video materials, a variety of emotions is evoked, such as laughter, anger, excitement, boredom, sadness and others. These reactions are caused by verbal/linguistic stimuli by the performers (actors, singers), visual-spatial elements of the scene and/or music (rhythm, melody, harmony). These three elements form a unity and make the intellectual profile of an individual (Gardner, 2000; Berk, 2009). The brain processes the contents of video clips and facilitates learning as follows:

- Verbal/Linguistic: the learning process takes place through reading, listening, discussion
- Visual/Spatial: Learning through seeing, imagination, creating mental images
- Musical: learning through seeing, mumbling, listening to music, performing, and rhythm recognition

The left hemisphere of the brain is primarily responsible for logic and analytical way of information processing (the logic, the language), whereas the right hemisphere of the brain is creative, emotional, intuitive, non-verbal, empathetic, and it focuses on the images, colors, art and music (Polk & Kertesy, 1993; Jourdain, 1997; Berk, 2009). Video clips engage both brain hemispheres. The left one handles the rhythm, words, dialogue, whereas the right one handles sound effects, visual images, melody and harmony (Hebert & Peretz, 1997).

3. Feedback

New technologies allow both interpersonal feedback - which involves interaction between people - and intrapersonal feedback that is self-assessment during the learning process. Two types of interpersonal feedback are present during classes: professor-student feedback and vice versa, and feedback from other sources, which allows the use of new technologies. Feedback can be auditory (hearing), visual, tactile, kinesthetic, and vestibular (Gabrielsson, 2003; Welch et al., 2005). While the interpersonal feedback requires more people being involved in the learning process (particularly emphasizing the interaction between professors and students), the intrapersonal feedback indicates its own commitment, self-motivation and self-learning.

4. Google, YouTube, Facebook, Viber, WhatsApp, mobile phones

Surfing the Internet (the Web) is a modern module of discovering new horizons and rapid dissemination of information. *Google* - search engine, has an exceptional value for use both in the teaching process in the classroom and outside the classroom. Features that can be found on it are colorful, ranging from fun to informative, from the older to the newer. During the *Voice Technique* course, *Google* search is of great importance because it offers a wide range of information in the form of texts and pictures of anatomy and physiology of the vocal apparatus.

Using new devices and methods allow the students to examine and familiarize themselves with the ubiquitous, yet hidden instrument-the human voice. Being topical teaching tool in the classroom and outside of it, *YouTube* vlog can be used both, online and offline. By using video recordings, professors and students can follow world trends, see and hear the news, but also they can communicate and master teaching material with more ease. Caution should be exercised when selecting video clips, since on the *"market"* there are many amateur, semi-professional and professional video clips.

At the beginning of the studies, drama students are first acquainted with the anatomy and physiology of the vocal apparatus. Given the fact that the process of creating the voice is not visible with the naked eye, video recordings facilitate the teaching since they provide audio-visual image and therefore, what is hidden becomes clear, understandable and applicable consciously. Although the process of creating an active voice engages the whole human body, for methodological reasons, this process is explained through three phases: breathing - respiration (inhalation, exhalation) phase, the direct creation of the basic tone – phonation phase, and final, the formation of a tone – resonance phase. By using photos and videos, students get the bigger picture of the bones, muscles, ligaments, organs and fluids which actively participate in the creation of voice. In addition, students get to know more about their part and activation method throughout the speech or singing.

Examples of recordings from *YouTube* that can be used in the classroom when talking about the anatomy and physiology of the vocal apparatus, that is, in the process of vote are as follows:

1. Example of respiration:
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hp-gCvW8PRY
2. Example of phonation:
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bBGCSMcU2Rs&list=PLjMMX16b_0ob_vMW9HDxaQPithFEW37I
3. Laryngoscopy (how to move the vocal cords)
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Drns_eV9wWg&index=3&list=PLjMMX16b_0ob_vMW9HDxaQPithFEW37I

Video materials are used during classes, but also outside classes. Sharing images, as well as sharing instructions and discussions about them, is allowed by social networks and new communication channels, such as *Facebook, Skype, Viber* and *WhatsApp*. Preferential side of sharing photos and recordings, and discussing about them is that they can be carried out in real time regardless of the place of residence. Students are motivated, active and they can understand the course content easier.

In further education, the drama students fall within the scope of musical theater. Most students have no formal education, music education, consequently they learn texts by ear, especially during the demonstration by pedagogues and with the piano support, and outside classes they do it with the help of recordings. In order to spend time appropriately and speed up the process of mastering the musical material (songs), mobile phones have found their appropriate place as the educational tool. Students can individually in the class record their own or educators' performances to the assigned song. Recordings from classes are one efficient way to save time and facilitate learning by listening to songs of existing recordings on *YouTube*. The recordings can be audio or audio-visual. Priority is given to audio-visual recordings, because they proved to be a great asset not only as auditory feedback, but also as a visual feedback where students can see and recognize their own stage performance - physical manifestations during the singing. Pointing out the vocal and physical mistakes as well as the feedback from the recordings greatly facilitates and enhances teaching and positively influences the development of students' abilities. These recordings from classes are there to be reviewed and analyzed, immediately after the recording, and they serve to correct the detected errors, if possible, in relation to individual ability and students' skills. Once the errors are corrected, the whole process is repeated: recording, playback and analysis. Very often during classes the students make several recordings. Students can re-record their own performance outside the school, record and listen to existing recordings of songs (their own performance or the performance of others) and see the plays as a whole (musical, cabaret, operetta) on the Internet. In addition, students have the opportunity of independent research on the current performers, the existing scenes and achievements connected with the musical theater, as well as the ability to share content and discussions found, among themselves and with professors.

The quickest and easiest way of exchanging materials (primarily recordings), opinions, the current analysis and discussion among themselves and educators is allowed by *Facebook, Viber* and *WhatsApp*. Networking students and educators (forming groups on the Internet) speeds up the forwarding and dissemination of information, promotes the teaching and develops individual abilities and talents.

Conclusion

The ubiquity of new technologies and new communication channels enables remote access, discussion, exchange of ideas and the exchange of educational materials and videos between students and professors from the same university, from the same country, between students and professors from other countries, as well as artists, students and professors from around the world. Their integration in the learning process is very important from the aspect of practically and adequately using time during classes and outside classes. In addition, a positive effect is the expansion of horizons and the increase of educators and students' creativity, and the development of effective ways of teaching and learning.

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