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## EDUCATION, TECHNOLOGY AND CREATIVE INDUSTRY: A CASE STUDY OF WATTPAD

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### Abstract

*This article investigates the use of Wattlepad application, launched in 2006, in upper secondary Portuguese language classes as an educational tool for reading and writing texts. This study has two objectives: (i) to present the main usability characteristics of Wattlepad and (ii) to propose possible implementation actions of the application as a didactic-pedagogical tool in upper secondary education. To this end, we present a case study in which we assessed the first and the latest written productions on Wattlepad platform of 22 students aged 15 to 17 years, attending the 1st year of upper secondary education in the same classroom of São Paulo state education system.*

**EDUCATION • READING • TEXT • TECHNOLOGY**

## EDUCAÇÃO, TECNOLOGIA E INDÚSTRIA CRIATIVA: UM ESTUDO DE CASO DO WATTPAD

### Resumo

*Observando o aumento dos softwares na área da Educação, este artigo investiga a utilização do aplicativo Wattlepad, lançado em 2006, nas aulas de língua portuguesa do ensino médio como uma ferramenta educativa para leitura e produção de textos. Neste estudo, dois objetivos são investigados, a saber: (i) apresentar as principais características da usabilidade do Wattlepad e (ii) propor possíveis ações de implementação do aplicativo como instrumento didático-pedagógico no ensino médio. Para tanto, apresentamos um estudo de caso no qual avaliamos as primeiras e as últimas produções escritas na plataforma Wattlepad de 22 jovens de 15 a 17 anos, estudantes de uma mesma sala de 1ª série do ensino médio da rede pública do Estado de São Paulo.*

**EDUCAÇÃO • LEITURA • TEXTO • TECNOLOGIA**

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## L'ÉDUCATION, LA TECHNOLOGIE ET L'INDUSTRIE CREATIVE: UNE ÉTUDE DE CAS DE WATTPAD

### Résumé

*Cet article étudie l'utilisation de l'application Wattpad, lancée en 2006, dans les cours de langue portugaise du lycée comme outil pédagogique pour lire et écrire des textes. Dans cette étude, deux objectifs sont étudiés, à savoir: (i) présenter les principales caractéristiques d'utilisation de Wattpad et (ii) proposer des actions possibles de mise en œuvre de l'application en tant qu'instrument didactique-pédagogique dans l'enseignement secondaire. Donc, nous présentons une étude de cas dans laquelle nous avons évalué les premières et dernières productions écrites sur la plateforme Wattpad de 22 jeunes, âgés de 15 à 17 ans, étudiants de la même salle de classe du réseau public de l'État de São Paulo.*

**ÉDUCATION • LECTURE • TEXTE • TECHNOLOGIE**

## EDUCACIÓN, TECNOLOGÍA E INDUSTRIA CREATIVA: UN ESTUDIO DE CASO DEL WATTPAD

### Resumen

*Con la observación del aumento de software en el campo de la educación, este trabajo investiga el uso de la aplicación Wattpad, lanzada en 2006, en la secundaria de lengua portugués como una herramienta educativa para la lectura y producción de textos. En este estudio, tenemos dos objetivos, a saber: (i) presentar las principales características de la usabilidad del Wattpad y (ii) proponer posibles acciones de implementación de la aplicación como instrumento didáctico-pedagógico en la secundaria. Por lo tanto, presentamos un estudio de caso en el que evaluamos las primeras y las últimas producciones escritas en la plataforma Wattpad de 22 jóvenes de 15 a 17 años, estudiantes de una misma sala de 1ª serie de la secundaria de la red pública del Estado de São Paulo.*

**EDUCACIÓN • LECTURA • TEXTO • TECNOLOGÍA**

“I am linked therefore I am.”

Kenneth Gergen

**D**UE TO THE ADVANCES OF WEB 2.0, WE HAVE COME TO RELATE IN A DIFFERENT WAY, because the speed provided by cybernetic networks has altered the behavior of people and provided us with other forms of (inter) action. The emergence of mobile devices and their various applications, whose downloads are mostly free or partially free, greatly contributed to these changes. Santaella (2013) explains that currently we can interact anywhere in the world through a mobile device connected to the internet with a simple touch of our fingers, and have thus acquired the power of ubiquity, that is, of being in two places at the same time: in the physical environment and in the digital universe.

Among the many applications available for download on mobiles and on computers, in this article we are interested in Wattpad. This application has been on the rise since its release in 2006. For example, version 6.48.1 has had more than 50 million downloads in the *mobile* version.<sup>1</sup> Its market niches have also diversified: in the beginning, it was designed for the free amusement of amateur writers; later, it became part of specialized communities of *fanwriters*<sup>2</sup> and currently it is being used in school education as a means of teaching and

<sup>1</sup> This number was updated on June 28, 2017 in the mobile version, that is, in the version specially developed for use in smartphones, iPhones, tablets and the like.

<sup>2</sup> *Fanwriters* are the writers of fanfictions. This term, as proposed by Jenkins (2009, p. 380), refers to «any prose narrative with stories and characters drawn from the contents of the mass media.»

learning (cf. CHIEREGATTI, 2018). Our analysis interest in this study is the latest market adhesion.

Overall, the great success of Wattpad is due to the editorial possibilities that it has unveiled to the general public. It allows anyone to create, edit and publish a work, whether it be fiction or not. As a result, this application has exploited a rather underserved market niche of amateur publications, especially in countries undergoing a book industry crisis, such as Brazil.<sup>3</sup> This segment of the book market did not have a space in the national territory, due to several factors: low number of large national publishers; the inexperience of new writers in the publishing market, the high cost of producing and selling books, the uncertainty of publishers on the success of the venture, among other factors. Thus, when Wattpad provided the opportunity to publish works of any writer, regardless of whether s/he was known, and for free, with the advice and interventions of her/his readers, its growth was proportional to its knowledge by the various social groups of readers and writers who, as we have said, have gradually expanded.

In this article, we understand Wattpad as a *Creative Industry*.<sup>4</sup> For the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), cultural and creative industries are defined as sectors of organized activity, whose main purpose is the (re)production, promotion, dissemination and/or commercialization of cultural goods, services and artistic or patrimonial activities.<sup>5</sup> We also emphasize that the concept of creative industry has been in development for more than twenty years.

In the 1990s, the first initiatives were developed in Australia. Later, in 1997, the Creative Industries Taskforce emerged during the government of Tony Blair in the United Kingdom, definitively including this sector in the international market. Beyond wealth creation, the creative industry has a social function in local and global communities, as its definition points out. Therefore, as a point of intersection between profit and social promotion, the theme of creative industry is very relevant in contemporary times; and when it is translated into the field of education, its importance grows.

Understanding the pertinence of our object of analysis, Wattpad, and its conceptual structure, creative industry, as well as its inclusion in a particular market niche – education –, this research has two specific objectives, namely: (i) to analyze the main features of Wattpad usability; and (ii) to examine possible actions to implement the application as a didactic-pedagogical tool in Brazilian upper secondary education.<sup>6</sup> Considering these objectives, the research problem

<sup>3</sup> In 2016, the Brazilian publishing market decreased by 5.2% in comparison to 2015 - this percentage considers the inflation rate in the period - and, in addition to that of 2017, the total loss reached 17%. This data was taken from the Production and Sales report of the Brazilian Publishing Sector, released on May 17, 2017 by Fundação Instituto de Pesquisas Econômicas (FIPE), Sindicato Nacional dos Editores de Livros (SNEL) and Câmara Brasileira do Livro (CBL).

<sup>4</sup> For more on this topic, we indicate the reading of Coelho, Costa and Santos (2018).

<sup>5</sup> Since 2004, Unesco has been conducting a detailed study on the network of creative cities in the world. This study aims to promote cooperation between cities on a local and international level, as well as to track creative proposals and their advancement around the world. So far, the mapping has registered more than 110 cities. The data are available at: <http://en.unesco.org/creative-cities/>. Access on: Nov. 10, 2018.

<sup>6</sup> For more information on a didactic-pedagogical project applied to primary education, we recommend reading Costa, Coelho and Medina (2018).

of this article is to verify, evaluate and discover what the impacts of using Wattpad in the teaching and learning process of reading and writing practices are.

Impacts are understood as changes observed in the writing process *in/through* the production of texts, prioritizing the repeated changes in the group of students to the detriment of the singularities of each student. We consider that, when we talk about impact and, consequently, about its indicators, the concept of evaluation also comes to the fore. Therefore, the following reflection by Romão (2018), which addresses the factors related to evaluation in education, is pertinent:

Regardless of its version, it always carries with it a classificatory dimension: even if one compares the quality of someone's performance by verifying the positive impacts of a learning process. That is, even if one compares different moments of the performance of the same person, without comparisons with the trajectories of another, there will always be a comparative, classificatory dimension. When one inquires whether students have "advanced" in relation to their previous performance in a learning process, the question itself carries a desirable point of arrival. After all, where did they "advance" to, in what direction, to what desirable point? In order to verify their progress in relation to their own previous situations, it is necessary to compare them with desirable and previously established patterns in the points to which "they advanced". Therefore, even in its diagnostic dimension, the evaluation always presents a comparative, classificatory bias. Similarly, it can be said that every evaluation carries with it a diagnostic dimension, since, even if the evaluator does not have the resources or the will to help those who have performed poorly, the realization of weaknesses leads to corrections.<sup>7</sup> (ROMÃO, 2018, p. 37-38, our translation)

Indeed, in this study, when we use the term impact, we do not intend to induce a study based on a classificatory evaluation, of summative nature, of each student. On the contrary, we chose to observe the general characteristics of the

7 In the original: "Seja em que versão for, ela [avaliação] sempre carrega consigo uma dimensão classificatória: mesmo que se compare a qualidade do desempenho de alguém a partir da verificação dos impactos positivos de um processo de aprendizagem. Isto é, ainda que se compare momentos diferentes da *performance* da mesma pessoa, sem comparações com as trajetórias de outrem, haverá sempre uma dimensão comparativa, classificatória. Quando se indaga se o aluno 'avançou' em relação ao desempenho que apresentava anteriormente a um processo de aprendizagem, a própria pergunta carrega consigo um ponto de chegada desejável. Afinal, ele 'avançou' para onde, em que direção, para que ponto desejável? Para a verificação de seus avanços em relação às suas próprias situações anteriores, é necessário compará-los a padrões desejáveis e previamente estabelecidos nos pontos para os quais 'ele avançou'. Portanto, mesmo na sua dimensão diagnóstica, a avaliação apresenta sempre um viés comparativo, classificatório. Da mesma forma, pode-se dizer que toda avaliação carrega consigo uma dimensão diagnóstica, já que, mesmo que o avaliador não disponha de recursos nem de vontade para ajudar os que apresentaram mau desempenho, a constatação das fragilidades potencializa correções."

groups rather than the singularities of each student, because we understand that analyzing the impact of using Wattpad using a classificatory evaluation firstly with a diagnostic and then with a formative character is more fruitful for our research. It is diagnostic because the classification of the results obtained aims to verify, based on certain criteria, what the field is like. It is formative because we consider that teaching and learning take place in a continuous, dynamic and adaptive process.

In addition, it is understood that producing texts is also a process with several steps, such as: planning, writing, reviewing, editing, and rewriting. Hence, the writer's competencies are diverse, since s/he must master the grammatical and orthographic system of the language in order to articulate ideas in sentences, paragraphs, and other syntagmatic units. Barbeiro (2001) explains why, in contemporary times, the procedural dimension of a text is examined:

Over the last decades, research on writing has highlighted process training. The text (the product) is not born without the process. The teaching-learning perspective of writing has shifted from the product to what happens in this process. In it, the subject is called to make decisions, not to assemble pieces, according to a predefined algorithm.<sup>8</sup> (BARBEIRO, 2001, p. 65-66, our translation)

From the perspective of the teacher that evaluates the teaching and learning process, each step of the student's writing consists not only of correcting spelling and grammatical errors, but also of developing arguments, describing actions, objects and characters, among other discursive skills/competencies. This is due, as Barbeiro (2001, p. 66, our translation) explains, to the ability to maintain the diversity and recursivity of components throughout the writing process and, at the same time,<sup>9</sup> "to treat information according to perspectives such as linguistic correction, appropriateness to the recipient's knowledge, the strategic choice to reach objectives".<sup>10</sup>

This perspective corroborates the process of schooling that, according to Marcuschi (2001, p. 22, our translation), is "a formal and institutional practice of teaching that aims at an integral formation of the individual".<sup>11</sup> In addition,

**8** In the original: "A investigação das últimas décadas sobre a escrita colocou em evidência a formação processual. O texto (o produto) não nasce sem o processo. A perspectiva sobre ensino-aprendizagem da escrita deslocou-se do produto para o que acontece nesse processo. Nele, o sujeito é chamado a tomar decisões, não se a montar peças, segundo um algoritmo pré-definido."

**9** Although widely used in the literature, the concepts of recursivity and diversity, when applied to the language domain and other fields, have not been given a clear and unambiguous definition. In this article, we assume that recursivity is the property of grammatical and discursive rules that can be reapplied successively to the structures resulting from its previous application, whereas diversity refers to the property that, in a single textual unit, there may coexist different discourses, coming from different speakers, different cultures and linguistic communities. Using these properties in the field of text production, we can say that recursivity and diversity manifest themselves in the discursive capacity of, in the same text unit, resuming, dialoguing with and discussing a variety of discourses and texts.

**10** In the original: "de tratar a informação segundo perspectivas como a correção linguística, a adequação ao conhecimento do destinatário, a escolha estratégica para alcançar os objetivos".

**11** In the original: "uma prática formal e institucional de ensino que visa a uma formação integral do indivíduo".

the process perspective of writing contributes to the teaching of the Portuguese language, because, as Antunes (2007, p. 40, our translation) argues, “language is a complex entity, a set of integrated and interdependent subsystems”.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, in order to write a text, it is necessary to know not only the grammatical rules and classes of words, but also and above all the contexts of use of words, interdiscourses and coercions of the genres of discourses (BAKHTIN, 2016). Based on these assumptions, we agree with Garcez (1998, p. 2, our translation) when she defines writing as “a social and collective construction both in human history and in the history of each individual. The learner needs other people to begin and to continue writing”.<sup>13</sup> In short, it is understood that writing is a process that is socially constructed by literate individuals.

According to Soares (1998), literacy is the effective and competent participation of people in social and professional practices associated with the use of language. Soares (2002, p. 144, our translation) also defines literacy in cyberspace as “the social practices of reading and writing and the events in which these practices are put into action, as well as their consequences on society”.<sup>14</sup> Marcuschi (2001, p. 21, our translation) follows this current of thought because, according to him, literacy “is a process of social and historical learning of reading and writing in informal contexts and for utilitarian uses, it is a set of practices, that is, ‘literacies’”.<sup>15</sup> From these assumptions we assert the writing process is a fundamental part of the literacy of the subject and this is supported by several contemporary authors (see TERRA, 2018; COELHO; PALOMANES, 2016; FERRAREZI JÚNIOR; CARVALHO, 2015).

Therefore, in investigating the usability characteristics of Wattpad and its implementation in a didactic sequence as a didactic-pedagogical tool, we are specifically delimiting the relationship between education, technology and the creative industry, from the most singular to the most general, which characterizes the method applied in this article as a case study (ANDRÉ, 2005), which, we emphasize, also serves as a data collection instrument. And from these relations, we verify how the above-mentioned stages of the writing process are altered, influenced and/or facilitated by the said technological device that also uses digital social networks.

The methodology of this study is inductive and qualitative. Based on this methodological choice, this paper describes the object of analysis to extract from it the general characteristics, since the scientific inductive process is based on particular data (facts, experiences, empirical statements, etc.), and, through a sequence of cognitive operations, reaches more general concepts (see GIL, 2013).

12 In the original: “a língua é uma entidade complexa, um conjunto de subsistemas que se integram e se interdependem irremediavelmente”.

13 In the original: “uma construção social, coletiva, tanto na história humana quanto na história de cada indivíduo. O aprendiz precisa das outras pessoas para começar e para continuar escrevendo”.

14 In the original: “as práticas sociais de leitura e escrita e os eventos em que essas práticas são postas em ação, bem como as consequências delas sobre a sociedade”.

15 In the original: “é um processo de aprendizagem social e histórica da leitura e da escrita em contextos informais e para usos utilitários; por isso é um conjunto de práticas, ou seja, ‘letramentos’”.

In other words, it goes from effects to causes, from consequences to the principle, from experience to theory. Within this thinking, it is appropriate to conduct a case study because, according to André (2005), it is a qualitative method.

Theoretically, this is an interdisciplinary study, because we welcome two areas of knowledge: Digital Education and Technology. We consider the epistemology of each one, because, from Digital Education, we turn our attention to dealing with the digital environment as part of the educational process and not as a part or secondary instrument; and from Technology, we recover the technical aspects that ensure the efficient and effective use of the tools. We used the studies of Digital Education (BRITO, 2006; COSCARELLI; RIBEIRO, 2005; CAVALLO; CHARTIER, 2002) and Technology (JENKINS, 2009; RECUERO, 2011). We chose these two currents of thought because they consider, each in their own way, the technical and pedagogical aspects that make up the Wattpad object.

As previously mentioned, we also used the case study as a data collection tool, as proposed by André (2005). According to the author, the case studies applied to the educational field can be understood as opportunities for researchers to focus on the understanding of the educational action of a given context/situation/action. The corpus selected during this case study consists of the first and latest written productions of 22 young people aged 15 to 17 years, students from the same upper secondary classroom of the public school system of São Paulo state.<sup>16</sup>

The methodology of this study is inductive, as already mentioned, except that we start from a hypothesis of analysis. We welcome this hypothesis because it operationalizes the purpose of our research. Our hypothesis is that the potential of the internet enables new reading and writing practices outside and within the school environment, which can be enhanced by the teaching-pedagogical orientation of the teacher-school and by the use of technological devices and digital social networks.<sup>17</sup> In this case, we start from the premise that the use of the Wattpad application not only stimulates the creation, production and circulation of new literary works in the Brazilian publishing market, but can also stimulate them in the school environment, especially in the Portuguese language classes of Brazilian upper secondary school.

The emphasis on upper secondary education is due to the general principle promoted by the recently-launched *Base Nacional Curricular Comum*

<sup>16</sup> All the participants of the research signed the term of free and informed consent, which was retained in the school, because the participants are minors. Therefore, the researchers of this article were given the responsibility term issued by the school unit, which authorized the research provided that its participants (students, teachers, etc.) and the school itself were guaranteed anonymity.

<sup>17</sup> According to Recuero (2011, p. 24, emphasis in the original), "a social network is defined as a set of two elements: *actors* (people, institutions or groups, network nodes) and their *connections* (interactions or social ties) (WASSERMAN; FAUST, 1994; DEGENEN; FORSE, 1999). A network is a metaphor for observing the connection patterns of a social group, from the connections established between the various actors. The network approach focuses on social structure, where it is not possible to isolate social actors and their connections." [In the original: "uma rede social é definida como um conjunto de dois elementos: *atores* (pessoas, instituições ou grupos; os nós da rede) e suas *conexões* (interações ou laços sociais) (WASSERMAN; FAUST, 1994; DEGENNE; FORSE, 1999). Uma rede é uma metáfora para observar os padrões de conexão de um grupo social, a partir das conexões estabelecidas entre os diversos atores. A abordagem de rede tem seu foco na estrutura social, onde não é possível isolar os atores sociais e nem suas conexões".] Therefore, a social network can exist both outside and within the possibilities of cybernetics. However, digital social networks differ in that they occur in a virtualized environment, built by a connection to the worldwide computer network, called the internet, in which the actors are in absentia, that is, they are not face to face.



(BNCC – National Curricular Common Basis), which provides for “learning in tune with the *needs, possibilities and interests* of students and also with the challenges of contemporary society” (BRASIL, 2018, p. 14, emphasis added), as defined in the introduction of the document. In addition, specifically in the section on upper secondary education, the document states that the school should consider the youths’ diversity and, thanks to this, encourage students of this level of education to define their life projects, thus making them protagonists of their own schooling process:

Considering that there are many youths means organizing a *school that welcomes diversity*, promoting, in an intentional and permanent way, respect for the human person and his/her rights, and, in addition, a school that guarantees students can be *protagonists of their own schooling process*, recognizing them as legitimate interlocutors to discuss curriculum, teaching and learning. It means, in this sense, to ensure they have a formation that, in tune with their paths and histories, allows them to define their *life projects*, both with regard to study and work and with regard to the choices of healthy, sustainable and ethical lifestyles.<sup>18</sup> (BRASIL, 2018, p. 463, emphasis added; our translation)

Therefore, it is necessary to present, reflect on and discuss the reading and writing practices promoted by mobile devices and computers. As Cavallo and Chartier (2013) point out, in contemporary times, a text is made by several different hands or at least by clipping, fragmentation and intervention practices, which radically modify our relationship with writing:

[...] the immediately visible difference in the printed book between writing and reading, between the author of the text and the reader of the book, disappears for the benefit of a different reality: before the screen, the reader becomes one of the authors of a text written by several hands or, at least, the reader is in a position to compose a new text from fragments freely cut out and gathered together. As the owner ribaldone, works of very diverse natures, the reader of the electronic age can construct in its own way original text sets whose existence, organization and appearance depend only on him/her. But, in addition, s/he can at any

<sup>18</sup> In the original: “Considerar que há muitas juventudes implica organizar uma *escola que acolha as diversidades*, promovendo, de modo intencional e permanente, o respeito à pessoa humana e aos seus direitos. E mais, que garanta aos estudantes ser *protagonistas* de seu próprio processo de escolarização, reconhecendo-os como interlocutores legítimos sobre currículo, ensino e aprendizagem. Significa, nesse sentido, assegurar-lhes uma formação que, em sintonia com seus percursos e histórias, permita-lhes definir seu *projeto de vida*, tanto no que diz respeito ao estudo e ao trabalho como também no que concerne às escolhas de estilos de vida saudáveis, sustentáveis e éticos.”

time intervene in texts, modify them, rewrite them, make them his/her property. Thus, the whole relationship with writing is deeply subverted.<sup>19</sup> (CAVALLO; CHARTIER, 2013, p. 31, free translation)

In order to grasp the educational potential of creative industries, such as Wattpad, we start from the following question: How can the teaching-learning process of reading and writing practices be improved by the use of digital technological devices and social networks in contemporary times? This question guided our whole study, and we return to it in the final considerations of this article.

## WATTPAD AND ITS MAIN FEATURES

Wattpad is an application made up of a digital social network. It was created and developed by Canadians Allen Lau and Ivan Yuen in mid-2006. According to the company's official website, its function is to enable new narratives to reach as many readers as possible.<sup>20</sup> To do so, it uses a collaborative digital social network, in which any registered user can participate, initiating the process of writing a book or offering tips and recommendations to others.

Also according to the company's official data, Wattpad has a community of more than 45 million people around the world. The success of this application is largely due to the revelation of new literary talents in a proportion never before seen. Its goal is to be the largest disseminator of new literary publications in the world. To this end, it associates writings from the most diverse locations in the world, based on the potential of the internet and mobile technology. On this application, new books are launched every day, while others are expanded, finalized, or modified.

It is interesting to diagnose that the digital social network can be accessed not only from a computer, but also from other technological devices, such as smartphones and tablets, connected to the internet. This range of possibilities provides greater mobility for writers and readers, who can write or read their books at any time, from anywhere. It should be noted that there is a screen layout for the mobile version (iPhones, smartphones, tablets, and the like) and another for the computer version.

To start interacting on the application, users download Wattpad (available on the two most used platforms, iOS and Android, and also for Windows) to

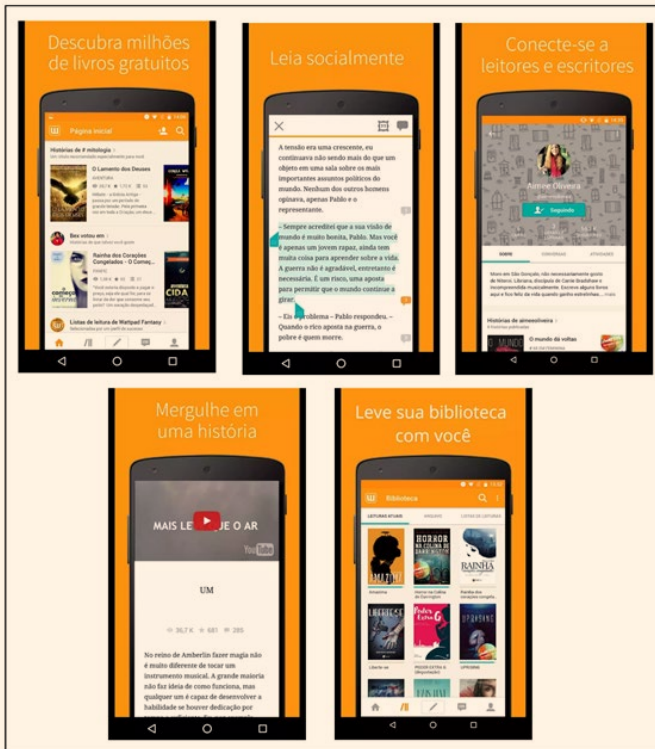
<sup>19</sup> In the original: "a diferença, imediatamente visível, no livro impresso entre a escrita e a leitura, entre o autor do texto e o leitor do livro, desaparece em proveito de uma realidade diferente: o leitor, diante da tela, torna-se um dos autores de uma escrita a várias mãos ou, pelo menos, encontra-se em posição de constituir um texto novo a partir de fragmentos livremente recortados e reunidos. Como o proprietário ribaldone, obras de naturezas muito diversas, o leitor da era eletrônica pode construir a seu modo conjuntos textuais originais cuja existência, organização e aparência somente dependem dele. Mas, além disso, ele pode a qualquer momento intervir nos textos, modificá-los, reescrevê-los, torná-los sua propriedade. Assim, toda a relação com o escrito está profundamente subvertida."

<sup>20</sup> Available at: <https://www.wattpad.com/home>. Access on: Nov. 10, 2018.

their devices. Next, they fill in a brief registration through data migration from Facebook or manually – in the latter case, the company asks for the user’s name and e-mail and the creation of an access password. Then, the reader is provided with a multitude of literary titles. According to Allen Lau, one of Wattpad’s creators, with so many free access works, users spend more than 15 billion minutes per month on the application.<sup>21</sup>

It is interesting to note the promises that the application makes before the user downloads it. Wattpad explains that future users will have access to millions of free books, and will be able to read socially and connect with other readers and writers. In addition, the ability to take one’s library anywhere, as well as the immersive reading experience, are widespread factors in the advertising of the application. These characteristics are emphasized by Wattpad’s marketing as the most relevant of the application, as we can observe in the following sequence of images:

**FIGURE 1**  
**SEQUENCE OF ADVERTISEMENTS AND THEIR PROMISES<sup>22</sup>**



Source: Wattpad.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Available at: <http://www.benoliveira.com/2017/02/tap-wattpad-lanca-aplicativo-historias-forma-chat.html>. Access on: Nov. 10, 2018

<sup>22</sup> In the set of screens, the direction of the reading of the figures takes into account the verbal statement that explains the images of each mobile screen. Therefore, the predominant meaning of Figure 2 is between the verbal statement and the visual segment and it does not necessarily focus on the singularities that are arranged in each screen reproduction. Therefore, we chose not to present each screen in an enlarged size and to arrange them in a series in the same figure.

<sup>23</sup> Available at: <https://www.wattpad.com/home>. Access on: Nov. 10, 2018.

Once the user enters the application, digital books appear one after another. They are represented metonymically by their covers, which bear the names of the book and the author. Around the cover, other information is displayed, such as the number of views, interactions with the book, and positive ratings. There is also a brief synopsis in a single three to six-line long paragraph. This is the introductory information placed on the user screen for the display of the works.

Observing all these maneuvers of manipulation between the application and the user, we can affirm, supported by Manguel (1997), that, a priori, few are the data to start a reading. This digital situation, however, does not stray too far from the conditions of a bookstore, where possible consumer readers choose their books when they are still packed, based only on their titles and covers. As Chartier (1999) reports, the choice of a book to read is the result of a series of maneuvers and strategies, which range from the author's notoriety to the marketing scheme for that work, and include the editor, publisher size, distribution, and ultimately the bookstore seller. Thus, rather than casual or random, the route built by the application – from the selection and promotion of its best characteristics in its ads to the exhibition of some selected information of each work on the screen of its users – is part of a persuasive goal: to gain more and more users.

In the conditions of production and execution of the application, in most cases, the publisher is Wattpad itself, because, to date, the books produced within this digital social network have been written by young people aged 9 to 20 years, and the most active age group is 12 and 13-year-olds, according to data provided by the organization itself.<sup>24</sup> In this dynamic, the works produced are mostly amateur in the sense that they are not published by specialized publishers. In most cases, these works are literary plots written by the users themselves, which are usually published in small weekly chapters formatted to be read on small screens. As a result, they are more succinct and have short sentences with little elaboration.

Because the application is free and open access, there are few restrictions, and so, to write a work, practically nothing more than a registration is required of the writer. During the registration of the work, the system asks for a title, description, category (such as adventure, humor, terror, etc.), and language of the text, as well as the content and the copyright style adopted by the author. At the bottom of the page, there is a register of meta tags – words that help the system find the work in the middle of the others, which function as keywords. At this point, one can also include a custom book cover. Once these steps have been completed and all of these fields have been filled, the user can start writing, both on their computers and on the other devices already mentioned, and their texts are already made available for network readers and users to comment on and evaluate them.

A supposed advantage of the system is the community that, in addition to judging the work, can interfere directly in its content, since it has direct access to

the writer. Of course, writers may or may not heed the comments and accept the criticism of their readers. However, the possibility of interference is latent, far greater than in the broadcast-reception scheme discussed by McLuhan (2007) and the readers' letters section that Benjamin (1994) pointed out. In the face of the potential of the digital social network of cyberculture, we agree with Plaza (1990, p. 25) that: "In cyberspace, everyone is an author, nobody is an author. We are all producer-consumers: that is, the old and reluctant distinction between those who make and those who enjoy art is solemnly going down".

On the other hand, Plaza (1990) himself states that the interfaces affect the reader and that the reader has several ways of being included in the work. For this author, there is *passive participation*, in which the reader contemplates, perceives, imagines, among other actions. But there is also *active participation*, which occurs when there is exploration, manipulation of the object and also intervention. In the latter case, the viewer/reader can also modify the work. A third form is *perceptive participation*, which basically exists in kinetic art, in which perception is the primordial factor of the interpretation-action. Interactivity is a focal point for Plaza (1990) in the establishment of these forms of participation. And it is in this field, of interaction between reader and author, that Wattpad seems to interfere. In the next topic, we shall explore this field in the context of the upper secondary classroom, dealing specifically with the reading and the production of texts in the Portuguese language subject.

## A TEACHING-LEARNING PROPOSAL FOR READING AND WRITING TEXTS USING WATTPAD

When it comes to implementing digital technologies in education, there are several problems, from resistance by a portion of the teachers to the lack of up-to-date technical material. This demonstrates that there are problems of both material and interpersonal nature in this context of introduction of didactic-pedagogical ideas and methodologies associated with digital technologies. Brito (2007), when analyzing this situation, indicates that the school community can react in different ways and that the most frequent reactions are:

- (1) repelling technologies and trying to stay out of the process;
- (2) appropriating techniques and transforming life into a race after the new;
- (3) making use of the processes, developing skills that allow the access and control of the technologies and their effects.<sup>25</sup> (BRITO, 2006, p. 1)

<sup>25</sup> In the original: "(1) repelir as tecnologias e tentar ficar fora do processo; (2) apropriar-se da técnica e transformar a vida em uma corrida atrás do novo; (3) fazer uso dos processos, desenvolvendo habilidades que permitam o acesso e o controle das tecnologias e seus efeitos."

Even though reaction 1 is one of the most frequent, Brito (2006) insists that reaction 3 would be the most promising for the sphere of education, for several reasons. First, keeping out of the process of cybernetic (r)evolution is almost impossible, because at all times we are in (inter)action with technological devices, from the radio to the screen of the cell phone. Secondly, it is not the mere adoption of technological tools that transforms the teaching-learning process, since it is complex, dynamic and adaptive and, therefore, it is not restricted solely and exclusively to the didactic-pedagogical tools used by the classroom teacher. Hence the ineffectiveness of reaction 2. Thirdly, when the school community develops skills and abilities that allow access to and control of technologies and their effects – as suggested by reaction 3 –, the teaching-learning process can use digital technologies with greater adaptation to educational objects, as well as with greater probability of efficiency.

We also emphasize that reaction 3 is the most useful one, since it makes explicit a primary factor in any inclusion of a didactic-pedagogical tool: no teaching medium can be used successfully without having undergone a previous method. This previous method is the planning done by the teacher who is responsible for establishing objectives, teaching objects, strategies, procedures, as well as forms of evaluation and their respective criteria. Without this, the inclusion of digital technologies into the classroom becomes an innocuous, incoherent action, which is, in fact, little efficient or not efficient at all in the sense that it cannot promote the acquisition of new knowledge and social values. According to Cysneiros (1998, p. 4), “computer uses that fail to qualitatively affect the school, teacher and student routine, or to exploit the unique features of the computer, fail to result in substantive changes, because only appearance actually changes.” Considering the pertinence of adopting digital technologies associated to school planning, we carried out a case study in a public school of São Paulo state education system with more than forty years of tradition and average levels of approval in the largest university entrance examinations. The school has twelve classrooms, a computerized library, a computer lab, a science and technology lab, a cafeteria, two courtyards, and a sports court. The faculty consists of 36 teachers, 25 of whom are permanent teachers and 11 are module teachers.<sup>26</sup> The management team has a principal, two deputy principals and two coordinators. The full staff consists of 82 people, including public servants and outsourced employees. The school has two shifts: morning (from 7 a.m. to 12 p.m.) and afternoon (from 1.30 p.m. to 6.30 p.m.), with students from early childhood to upper secondary education, with 300 students per shift. In 2017, 587 students were enrolled.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Module teachers are those who have not been assigned classes and who are in the school to teach the students in case the permanent teacher is absent. This nomenclature is adopted by São Paulo City Education Department.

<sup>27</sup> We do not name the institution, nor do we specify any members of the school community, in order to ensure their anonymity. All the data presented in this article were approved by the school management team.

We chose this institution for several reasons. The first one was the openness to the research that the management of this school offered. Secondly, the educational philosophy followed by the pedagogical team provides a favorable context for adopting new teaching and learning proposals, since they follow a humanistic strand that promotes the integral formation of the student, reinforcing the importance of the habit of studying and the system of constant evaluation, as well as personal development. Thirdly, teachers themselves, especially the teachers responsible for the Portuguese language discipline, reported that they faced difficulties in adopting digital technologies in the classroom, and that there was growing disinterest of upper secondary student in writing texts spontaneously unless they would turn into some grade. Another aspect highlighted is related not only to the fact that writing is not spontaneous, but also to the difficulty in writing, that is, in the formulation and organization of sentences for the construction of a text in written language.

In the face of this demand, a classroom was chosen to be the pilot of a proposal for teaching and learning to read and produce texts. The classroom selected had 22 students (12 female and 10 male) aged 15 to 17 years, attending the first year of upper secondary education. The time of the (1) observation, (2) planning, (3) execution, and (4) evaluation of the case study, conducted from January to June 2017, totaled more than 120 hours. Twenty hours were intended for classroom observation; twenty hours for planning with the teachers; sixty hours for the execution within the classroom with the students; and twenty hours for evaluation of the results with the education and management teams.

At the observation stage, it was found that the students were apathetic about copying texts from the blackboard. In many cases, they photographed the blackboard instead of copying the contents in their notebooks. In addition, teachers' explanations prior to the assessments were recorded by students on their smartphones as study material. A negative fact is that the students insisted on listening to music with headphones during some moments of the class, despite disapproval on the part of teachers and the management team.

In the planning stage, it was reported in meetings with Portuguese language teachers and later with the management team that the students already used various media in the classroom as study tools. For example, they used smartphone cameras as substitutes for the blackboard copy exercise and smartphone audio recorders for listening and memorizing; and the music played on smartphone headphones as an agent of interference in student-teacher communication. In all three cases, the potentialities of the smartphone sometimes fostered the learning process (cameras to copy contents and recorder to store contents) and sometimes hindered the teaching-learning process (music during the explanation of the lesson). This demonstrated to teachers and managers that the cybernetic (r)evolution was already present in the classroom everyday, even if, in a veiled way, or until that moment, it was misunderstood or not apparent.

Based on this, the researchers questioned each of the students about using Wattpad: "Do you know or use an app called Wattpad?". Of the 22 students,

18 answered that they knew the application. And nine of these 18 reported spontaneously that they used it frequently for reading and writing texts. Comparing the nine application users with the rest of the class, we can say that 40% of the students in this room had installed and published texts regularly on Wattpad. With this data, we constructed three didactic sequences that used Wattpad for reading and writing classes; each sequence was twenty-hours long (ten hours of class and ten hours of study by teachers and researchers), since there was already empathy between students and the application.

In the execution phase, the first didactic sequence was initially aimed at presenting the application functions to the students who had not yet installed Wattpad in order to encourage them to start using it. Next, it was proposed to relate the potentialities of this application to the production of the teaching object *adventure novel genre*.<sup>28</sup>

The instructions given for the execution of the novel adventure genre were as follows. First, the students read some excerpts from texts published by various users of this application. Then the teacher and the researchers read out loud some texts taken from Wattpad. Then the students, the teacher, and the researchers made comments on the texts read in the classroom, using Wattpad resources.

For writing the adventure novel on the application, the instructions were as follows. Firstly, the texts should have more than ten and less than thirty lines, with more than three paragraphs, presenting at least two characters in two different settings, and one to three dialogues between the said characters. Then the students were expected to comment on the texts of three different colleagues. The production was individual and the teacher would only evaluate the text that was published on Wattpad, followed the aforementioned rules and received at least a comment from a student other than the author of the story. The time from instruction to the teacher assessment stage was approximately a month, during which students were expected to explore, write, and give feedback on the application.

After this stage, not only did students publish the chapters of the requested genre, but over 80% of them also continued to write the story. For the success of this sequence, the endorsement of students who were already using the application was essential. The nine students who were frequent users of Wattpad validated the didactic-pedagogical proposal of the teacher and researchers and stimulated their peers to continue producing the genre.

Although the participation was significant, the teacher responsible for the class emphasized that, according to his perception, the chapters produced in this activity did not have the same quality of previous textual productions

<sup>28</sup> The adventure novel is a literary genre that emerged in the late nineteenth century. The background theme of its plot is an adventure. The main character of this type of novel (i.e., a long, complex story that is often subdivided into chapters) is generally sympathetic (a child, a teenager, an adult, or even an imaginary being). The conflict of the plot occurs when this character is, for some very serious reason (death of a relative or lover, a natural disaster, conflict of interest, etc.), removed from his or her routine, and then forced to face difficult situations and even exceptional circumstances.



written outside the virtual environment. We highlight that the researchers did not have access to such previous texts. However, we consider the teacher's report important as prior information of the students' writing process.

What researchers did analyze were the texts produced by the students on Wattpad platform. During the writing process, students used no other support – such as ruled paper – but computers with access to Wattpad. These texts published on Wattpad were corrected according to their graphic, grammatical and discursive competences, which had been agreed on by the teacher and the researchers before the beginning of the case study.

We discriminated the three competencies adopted to evaluate students' written productions. The ability to materially record in some medium the graphic signals that are historically, socially and culturally agreed upon in a given language was called *graphic competence*. In this competence, we evaluated: (a) the presence or absence of accentuation; (b) the spelling of each word; and (c) the student's handwriting.<sup>29</sup>

The ability to record during the use of the language the standards of the cultured norm of Brazilian Portuguese language was called grammatical competence.<sup>30</sup> For this competence, we examined the following linguistic aspects: (d) varied use of several classes of words; (e) nominal and verbal agreement; and (f) use of coordination and subordination.

The articulation of ideas, paragraphs and other syntagmatic units of the language for the production of meaning was called *discursive competence*. We verified this competence using the following criteria: (g) no contradiction of the arguments and elements of the narrative; (h) influence exerted by the organization of ideas throughout the text on the meaning; and (i) use of figures of language (metaphor, metonymy, gradation, hyperbole, irony, among others).

For evaluation, we adopted a scale from 0 to 10, with 0 being the minimum grade and 10 being the maximum, for each competence. The arithmetic mean obtained by the student is the result of the sum obtained in the evaluations in each competence, divided by the number of competences. Table 1 presents these arithmetic means and also whether the student achieved regular performance in each competency, i.e., 5.0. Below 5.0 the performance is unsatisfactory. Performance is considered satisfactory from 5.0 to 7.0, and excellent from 7.01 to 10.0.

<sup>29</sup> Calligraphy in the digital environment is not related to the stroke and the connections between the letters as the calligraphy in handwriting. We understand as intrinsic factors to calligraphy in the digital environment the following aspects: font, size and arrangement of the letters in the layout of the page.

<sup>30</sup> In agreement with Castilho (2010), we defend that the Portuguese language developed in the national territory promoted the formation of a new language different from Lusitanian Portuguese and with its own discursive, grammatical and lexical characteristics. Therefore, we adopt Brazilian Portuguese.

**TABLE 1**  
**FIRST PRODUCTIONS ON WATTPAD: ADVENTURE NOVEL GENRE - INDIVIDUAL WORK**

STUDENT \ COMPETENCE	GRAPHIC COMPETENCE	GRAMMATICAL COMPETENCE	DISCURSIVE COMPETENCE	GRADE
1				6.5
2				3
3				3
4				6.5
5				2
6			1	5
7			1	7.5
8				2
9				0
10				2
11				3
12				5
13				0
14			1	2
15				4
16				3
17		1		5
18			1	5
19				2
20				4
21				4
22			1	6.5
Requirement satisfaction index	4%	22%	27%	Mean 17% <sup>31</sup> 3.5 <sup>32</sup>

LEGEND	
	Indicates that the student achieved regular performance in the criterion (cut grade 5.0)
	Indicates that the student did not achieve regular performance in the criterion (grade lower than 5.0)

Source: Authors' elaboration.

In this table, in the first column, each cardinal numeral represents a particular student, and each line corresponds to the analysis of the numbered student. In the central columns, competences are evaluated according to the student's overall performance in that item. Green means the student achieved regular performance (5.0), whereas red means the student did not. The numerical grades obtained by the students are on the column on the right. And the lowest line presents the totals of the satisfaction index of each requirement, as well as the students' general arithmetic mean (3.5) and the general arithmetic mean of the percentages of the three competences (17%).

With regard to the results, in general, we can see that the criterion with the worst result was graphic competence (3%), followed by grammatical

<sup>31</sup> The general arithmetic mean of the percentage is the sum of the other percentages divided by the three competences, totaling 17%

<sup>32</sup> The general arithmetic mean is the sum of the other means, divided by the 22 students, which resulted in 3.5.

competence (22%), and discursive competence (27%). The overall mean of the three competences was 17%, which is relatively low for an upper secondary class.

The result was well below expectations given the student performance required by the school: at least 5.0 (five) points on a zero to ten scale, with zero being a totally unsatisfactory result and ten a fully satisfactory result. Thus, of the 22 students, only four students (1, 4, 7, and 22) scored above 5.0. In addition, we can highlight that students 9 and 13 did not perform the activity and, therefore, their grade was zero.<sup>33</sup>

The data showed that it was not the didactic-pedagogical sequence that needed to be adjusted, since it was not enough to include the use of the application into the school practices, especially as a means of producing texts. In other words, these unsatisfactory results showed that employing a technological tool without using all its resources, observing its limits and potentialities, is innocuous, in the sense that the students did not meet the teaching-learning expectations present in the plan.

Wattpad can improve the three competences, when it is well used by teachers in interaction with their respective students and the entire digital social network. The application can help to write, revise, edit and rewrite texts in a more agile and collaborative way, and authors also count on the voluntary critique of the community of readers of digital social networks. In the case of the activity, the guidance to write, review, edit, and rewrite was centered on the teacher, whereas the students were dispersed, since the production was individual. This proposal was not effective, because the community of readers of Wattpad was underused within this didactic pedagogical strategy. Therefore, it was necessary to redo the planning of the following two didactic sequences with the teachers, considering the data collected by the researchers.

In the second and third didactic sequences, the approach was readjusted. The proposal was to separate the classroom into groups of four to six students. The group formation criterion was the affinity of its members. Each group was asked to write an entire adventure novel with six characterized characters, at least ten chapters with 30 to 60 lines each. The teachers also proposed that the groups make at least three comments on the production of the chapters produced by the other groups.<sup>34</sup>

With this proposal, three groups of six students and one of four students were organized, totalizing four groups. Thus, each chapter would receive at least twelve comments, three from each group. However, the students' participation was far beyond what was expected. Each group received on average about sixty

<sup>33</sup> Students 9 and 13 failed to perform the activity because they missed the classes in which it was developed. In addition, these students reported that they could not carry out the activities at home because they did not have access to the Internet.

<sup>34</sup> It is noteworthy that other members of the Wattpad reader community interacted in the works published by the students, but the comments of this other type of interaction were not considered in this study. These data will be part of another scientific publication.

comments on each of the chapters. The most commented chapter received a total of 145 interventions and the least commented received 28.

The proposal of posting and commenting was guided by the teachers, who also made interventions. For comments, rules of mutual respect and technical quality were emphasized. For example, students could not use low-slang words or offend their peers, and comments should highlight the positive and negative aspects of the chapter's aesthetics, focusing primarily on the criteria of evaluation of the three competences: from (a) presence or absence of accentuation to (i) use of figures of language (metaphor, metonymy, gradation, hyperbole, irony, among others).

Therefore, with each comment, each group as a whole and its members in particular became aware of the mistakes they made in the writing process. The students edited their texts regarding both how to construct the periods and how to formulate and segment their paragraphs. This was the proposal of the second didactic sequence: edition of the novels by the groups. The duration of this stage, since the instructions until the completion of the novels by the four groups, was 45 days.

In the third didactic sequence, the groups had to improve their literary work and post it again for the appreciation of the whole class, as well as for the final evaluation of the teacher and researchers. In addition, each group had to briefly present the plot of their textual production to the classroom, discussing the difficulties overcome and how the comments of their classmates had helped construct the text. The oral presentation was carried out in four hours and each group had at least twenty minutes for oral presentation and ten minutes for discussion with classmates, the teacher and researchers). This stage, from the instruction to the oral presentation, lasted fifteen days.

As we can see, the second sequence planned the interaction between groups in the form of a social network using Wattpad digital social network. The third sequence prompted students to bring, from the digital universe into the classroom, their achievements in the oral presentation genre. Thus, the two sequentially performed didactic sequences complemented each other: from the digital universe to the classroom, and vice versa.

From this data, we can make some considerations. This collective construction using Wattpad presents positive results. However, it is important to define what the impact of this proposal was and to question: if such a process were carried outside the digital environment, would the results be the same?

In response to the first point, we consider that the predominant impact is the active and meaningful participation of the student, which promotes the protagonism of the young people who interfere in and act to foster their own schooling process. Such protagonism is encouraged by BNCC of upper secondary education (BRASIL, 2018). As for the second point, it is necessary to relativize the positive results, since the first attempt was not successful and the proposal had to be adjusted. Just as in a classroom using the blackboard and chalk, the proposal with Wattpad had to be realigned and adapted. Therefore, we can say that this strategy may or may not bring positive results depending on how flexible teachers are when applying this digital technology to their didactic-pedagogical proposals.

These points cannot be ignored when checking the following data that we bring as a final result: the grades obtained by the students in the latest productions on Wattpad.

**TABLE 2**  
**LATEST PRODUCTIONS ON WATTPAD: ADVENTURE NOVEL GENRE – GROUP WORK**

STUDENT	COMPETENCE			GRADE
	GRAPHIC COMPETENCE	GRAMMATICAL COMPETENCE	DISCURSIVE COMPETENCE	
1 (six students)	1	1	1	7,5
2 (four students)	1	1	1	8,5
3 (six students)	1	1	1	6,5
4 (six students)	1	1	1	8,5
Requirement satisfaction index	75%	75%	100%	Média 7,75

LEGEND	
	Indicates that the student achieved regular performance in the criterion (cut grade 5.0)
	Indicates that the student did not achieve regular performance in the criterion (grade lower than 5.0)

Source: Authors' elaboration.

As we can see, everyone scored above the 6.0 mean. The three competences with low performance before achieved high performance, especially the discursive competence, with 100% performance. Thus, the execution of the case study was quite satisfactory, not only because the students increased their final grade, but also because they reported that they will continue to use Wattpad to produce other literary and non-fiction genres. This was the greatest gain in the three didactic sequences: the encouragement to read and produce texts spontaneously.

In this article, these gains to the teaching-learning process are considered impact indicators, since they alert to the change from one stage to another – in this case, from low to regular performance. Of course, these impact indicators can be relativized depending on the medium and methodology used. What we are emphasizing in this work is that, under the conditions observed and analyzed in this case study, these gains are impact indicators, because, as previously mentioned, they alert that there was a change in the teaching-learning process.

We highlight the results of groups 2 and 4, which performed well in the three competencies. Although group 1 did not reach the regular performance in the graphic competence, it obtained a regular result in the other two competences. The same occurred with group 3, but the competence in which it did not perform regularly was the grammatical one. These differences in the performance of each group may have occurred because each group was formed according to the criterion of affinity of its members, which may have led those who had the most difficulty in spelling to gather in group 1 and those who had the most grammatical limitations to gather in group 2. This is just a hypothesis,

and more data on other group formations is needed to prove it. However, with the data we had access to, this was the closest explanation, and this is a subject to be explored in further studies.

Moreover, these data show that the three competences have autonomy and can be investigated on a case-by-case basis, but they interact throughout the text, because we can see that the two groups that had lower than regular performance (5.0) in one of the competences had the lowest arithmetic means when compared to the two groups that obtained regular grades in the three competences.

At the evaluation stage, meetings were held first with the teachers who participated in the execution, then with their managers and finally with the entire pedagogical team. In these three moments of discussion, it was understood that the application of the first didactic sequence had had unsatisfactory results, since the implementation of Wattpad as a didactic-pedagogical tool had not taken into account its functionalities – that is, Wattpad had been treated as another space for writing – and the fact that, besides being a means of text dissemination, it is a digital social network in which authors and readers talk, i.e., it is no longer a relation between the author and the printed book reader, as we have already commented drawing on Cavallo and Chartier (2002). When the didactic sequences were replanned, adjusting them to the digital social network features present in Wattpad, the way of evaluating and creating the texts changed. No longer was an isolated book chapter asked, in which the student might or might not have the idea of the whole, in which the student would begin a story that s/he would be unable to finish. The didactic-pedagogical orientation was different: an entire book was requested, with beginning, middle and end. In addition, the teachers, along with the researchers of this article, proposed that this textual production be collective, thus creating an internal social network from the formation of groups. This was foreseen since the proposal, as one of the instructions given by the teacher to the students was that each group should necessarily comment on the textual production of another group. These comments from one group to the other generated what we call here *internal social network*. We distinguish *internal social network* from *digital social network*, because the former concerns the comments made by the students of each group and the latter refers to the comments of all the members registered in the application – as already said, the comments of Wattpad users who were not students of the selected class were not considered in this study. As these groups should interact with each other through the comments on Wattpad, the internal social network of each group was gradually included in the Wattpad community and at the same time created its own digital territory, that is, a space of interaction of the students of that school in the digital social network.

The comments produced on Wattpad's social digital network played a key role here. In the interaction process on Wattpad, students could not address any subject or make any kind of intervention. There were previously established rules and the students were under the guidance, supervision and evaluation of teachers, who were also present through their comments. This way of acting and

interacting is the effective realization of reaction (3), discussed by Brito (2006, p. 1): “make use of processes, developing skills that allow access and control of technologies and their effects”.

The educators involved in the case study and the managers took these results to the pedagogical meetings with the other teachers and later presented them to the parents of the students involved in the study. All of them considered it a fruitful action. As a future development, it was recommended by the management team that other studies on the same theme and the execution of other didactic sequences be carried out in the school in the other disciplines.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Wattpad was not initially designed for use in schools. Even as a creative industry, which grows and expands its market niches, its orientation is not of a primarily pedagogical nature. Therefore, what this study did was to appropriate the technological resources present in the application of a creative industry of the publishing sector to develop teaching and learning processes in the Portuguese language classes.

We fulfilled the two specific objectives proposed. In the first topic, we described the main usability features of Wattpad. In the second, we proposed actions to use the application as a didactic-pedagogical tool in Brazilian upper secondary education, based on a case study that can be replicated by other educators and researchers, following the detailed steps.

Thanks to Wattpad, we were able to follow, in the didactic sequence proposed in this case study, the pertinence of accepting digital social networks in group dynamics. We also evidenced the relevance of considering criteria for the evaluation of global (graphic, grammatical and discursive) competences, which, albeit autonomous, are interrelated, mainly in the writing process (CHATIER, 1999; GARCEZ, 1998). The use of the application in group dynamics made the discursive competence reach regular performance (grade equal to or greater than 5.0) in the groups (see Table 2).

Thanks to this, we were able to obtain relevant results to answer the problematics exposed at the beginning of this work: how to *verify*, *evaluate* and *discover* the *impacts of using Wattpad* in the teaching and learning process of reading and writing practices. We propose that, in order to *verify* the impacts, there is a need for a planning in which didactic sequences accommodate technological devices without depriving them of their characteristics and potentialities. In addition, to *discover* and *evaluate* the impacts, it is necessary to adapt the planning to the characteristics of Wattpad’s digital social network.

Another note to be made regards implementation. As discussed by Piza et al. (2018), one of the factors influencing too much the efficiency of a public policy in the third sector, such as education, is how it is implemented. What we did was a pilot that, albeit scalable, needs more studies, because:

[...] there is no experimental impact assessment without implementation problems, given that one cannot anticipate all the problems that may occur. This influences the decision whether or not to scale the intervention. Aside from this, one must be careful because it is possible to test a pilot, find an effect, and then when scaling it, the effect disappears – not because the program does not work, but because the way it was implemented in the pilot is different.<sup>35</sup> (PIZA *et al.*, 2018, p. 160, our translation)

This caveat about the way of implementation was clear in this study, because although the final results are positive in comparison to the initial ones, we indicate that, in order to improve the teaching-learning process of reading and writing using technological devices and digital social networks, it is essential to foster the development of competences and abilities among students and teachers, together. Following this reasoning, the positive or negative impacts of using Wattpad as a pedagogical tool depend on the relation of the student and the teacher with the technological device. As already suggested by Brito (2006), it is deduced that the access and control of technologies and their effects, by both teachers and students, is what differentiates an active and proficient teaching and learning process from an innocuous and thus ineffective one, because it fails to lead students to learn and teachers to reflect on their teaching practice.

Comparing the results obtained with those of foreign studies on Wattpad and similar tools, such as those of Bal (2018), Aytan (2017) and Marcial (2016), we can deduce that the application has pedagogical potential. Nonetheless, as we have stressed, digital technology cannot be underutilized as an additional pedagogical tool, of a secondary nature, because this atrophies the competences that should be stimulated. It can be concluded that creative industries, such as Wattpad, can motivate the reading and production of texts both outside and within schools, but this depends on how they are used by teachers and students in the teaching and learning process, that is, on the organization of the didactic sequence, the adequacy of the pedagogical objectives in terms of the potentialities and usability features of the technological device, among other aspects. In other words, it is not enough simply to want to use a smartphone application to expose a pedagogical content; one must plan how to use it, delimiting practices and also evaluation criteria (before, during and after the activities).

**35** In the original: “não existe avaliação de impacto experimental em que não haja problemas com a implementação, tendo em vista que não se consegue antecipar todos os problemas que podem ocorrer. Isso influencia a decisão de escalar ou não a intervenção. Afora isso, deve-se ter cuidado, pois é possível testar um piloto, encontrar efeito e, depois, quando escalar, o efeito desaparecer – não porque o programa não funciona, mas porque a forma como ele foi implementado no piloto é diferente.”



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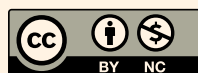
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