Vignette # 2.

Angela Novoa

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The story presented on “The Trash that Came from the Can” was about a school that was full of trash everywhere. One day it transformed into a big monster that fed on trash. When students discovered what was feeding the monster, they decided to throw the trash away in order to destroy it. In this vignette technology is used as tool that helps communicating a concern of the community and suggesting a solution that overcomes this concern. The solution encourages others to care of the school’s environment. Perhaps a better explanation of the relevance of environmental care would be effective to communicate and promote the reflection of the ethical issues that are related to this topic.

When I was watching the video I remembered an experience I had. Last year, on the school where I worked, during the recess, high school students spent time in the hallways and left trash in the floor. Also, they usually leave folders, notebooks, and even clothes above the lockers. It was common to hear the school inspector talking through the PA about the importance of being clean and not leaving trash or personal things in the hallways. Because of this situation we had a lot of students who alleged that someone stole something they left above the lockers. Teachers tried explaining the students that they had to be more careful with their things and leave them in the lockers. Otherwise, we encouraged them not to bring those things to school. In addition, we tried to reflect on the importance of taking care of the community, considering robbery as an issue that must not be accepted in this school. But, as the students were not careful with their stuff, there was a big chance that they lost things and that those things were not stolen.

The Immaculate Heart of Mary congregation (IHM), from Philadelphia, supports this school. Last year, for the Fourth of July celebrations, we had the visit of some sisters of the congregation. The principal was very concerned about the appearance of the hallways. The student council tried working through a campaign
to encourage their peers to leave trash in the cans and taking care of their personal things. The campaign had great results. However, when the sisters left our country, the trash issue appeared again. I wonder if including our students in the building of the campaign would make things different. Greenlaw (2001) presents the experience of different teachers of arts and humanities using diverse technologies in their practices. When discussing about implementing multimedia projects, one of these teachers –Marilyn- sustain that these activities are endless and they are beneficial for a lot of reasons, such as, motivation and better retention of learning. In addition, by working through video making you not only provide a meaningful experience for those who participated in its building, but also you create a record that can be used by others.

This story could include learning to recycle. Taking care of the environment not only involves throwing trash away, but also recycling. I have seen in some places (like New Zealand) how recycling is an issue that involves all the community. Teaching how to do it is responsibility of families, schools, governmental authorities, etc. I think it is important to learn these issues because our students will be shaping the world in the future. The will live in a better world as long as they are conscious about these things. Jacobsen & Goldman (2001) present the relevance of thinking about students' role in their social and biological world. In my community, learning how to care of our environment is an important issue. Starting from the fact that Santiago is one of the most polluted cities of the world.

A project using video making (where the students are active participants in it) would be effective in this matter. Kelly & Minnes (2001) posit that schools are not apart from the wider society. Schools are spaces of social transformation. That is why I consider the importance of teaching these issues in schools. Specially, Social Studies educators must take this responsibility. It is a relevant part of civic education. “In preparing democratic citizens, teachers play a key role in facilitating
classroom discussions of social and ethical issues” (Kelly & Minnes, 2001, p. 438).

One of the challenges of completing a similar project would be the technological expertise in the use of effective programs for video making. I know how to handle iMovie, but I think this video used more sophisticated programs (maybe something related to stop motion) that I am not expert in. Perhaps a huge staff was engaged with the project. One of the issues we must face in my community is the motivation of teachers and educational staff to work through these activities. Remembering Stacy Friedman’s experience through puppetry, I think that teacher’s bias is another issue to consider. What is going to be presented in the video is very important.

Based on social constructivism, I think that learning is a process where students are active participants. Through interaction with others, students build their knowledge and are transforming themselves in active members of their society. Teachers are facilitators who guide learners in the construction of knowledge rather than transmitting it. Jacobsen & Goldman (2001) state that power relations between teachers and learners are shifting due to the changing of educators’ role. Perhaps, including technologies that encourages students’ social participation is facilitating this. But using technology per se (for technology’s sake) will not make any difference. In order to enhance the learning process, it must be effectively supported in a learning approach.
References:

