

Digital Citizenship Values in Algerian Second Generation Textbooks : A Content Analysis of Third and Fourth year Middle School Second Generation Textbooks of Civic Education



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Abstract: While there are various types of teaching and learning materials, textbooks in print form have been crucial specific tools in the education process. These reliable resources are designed to meet the needs of a specific generation in a specific era. Today's students' needs; abilities and interactions are much different however. Given their interaction with digital technology and extensive use of social media sites, today's students' digital citizenship values are open to question. Central to this study are second generation civic education textbooks currently used in teaching third and fourth year middle school students and their critical role in enhancing the core digital citizenship values. Using mixed content analysis, the findings reveal the absence of the term 'digital citizenship' and the unsuccessful incorporation of the nine core digital citizenship concepts identified by Mike Ribble (2001). Ultimately, role and content of paper textbooks are to be up dated conveniently and therefore some ways to promote citizenship education of the digital environment adolescent learners grow up in are suggested.

Key words: Paper textbook, today's students, digital era, digital natives, digital citizenship values.

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1. Introduction

It is no news to anyone that nowadays learners are obsessed with social media platforms. Regardless of their gender, age, social background and many other variables, one cannot think of any learner without a social Network account. This may be because it goes unquestioned that today's learners are increasingly products of a digital world as they are dubbed by Marc Prensky (2001) 'digital natives'¹, or may be because social media neatly captures these key elements: participation, openness, conversation, community and connectedness (I Crossing's e-book). We recognise the benefits that today's learners might enjoy from social media use, but there are always two sides of a coin. Many young people are pushed to reform their knowledge and concepts about themselves and the surrounding world, and to change their values or, to use Farmer's words (2013), students are swimming in the ocean of values.

Our concern here is the issue of online participation and its close association with citizenship values. To put it in a nutshell, are our students prepared to be good responsible digital citizens? Are they taught the rules of the digital world they grow up in? We frequently hear the need to make learning authentic and to transform schools to meet learners' interests. As far as I can tell, there is nothing so consistently entrenched in learners' daily lives as their use of technological devices, including the internet use. Furthermore, with regard to learners' ability of technological use, Prensky (2001) went to prove that there is a digital gap between them and previous generations. Parents as digital immigrants feel excluded from their children's digital world and therefore no parental supervision in this frightening place.

For these reasons, saying 'No' to bad technology practices is insufficient but integrating digital citizenship into our classrooms is a vital part of this process. As educators teach students the norms of citizenship in their societies, there should be an added effort to teach them the norms of citizenship in their digital environment, also called digital citizenship, digital wellness or digital ethics. Through fortifying curriculums, syllabi and more importantly textbooks as they are effective and accessible learning tools, students can be taught to enjoy the huge benefits that internet and social media in particular offer but at the same time, they are made aware of its dangers.

Taking this as a starting point, the present paper examines digital citizenship values embedded in the Algerian middle school second-generation civic education textbooks, what role do they play in enhancing digital citizenship values and to what extent they succeed in incorporating the nine elements of digital citizenship identified by Mike Ribble (2001)?

2. Paper Textbooks and Today's Students

A textbook is one of the most useful tools in the education process. It provides great assistance not only to learners but to teachers too. It contains ready-made texts and tasks that enable students to be acquainted with the subject matter and offer some sort of security and confidence about what to teach for novice teachers in particular (Ur Penny, 1996). Generally, textbooks are succinctly written, tightly organized and greatly condensed by well qualified and experienced eminent authors (D. Gallahan, 1996). On reflection, ready-made textbook is thought to be only a provider of input into classroom lessons in the form of texts, activities, explanations and so on. Besides, its role seems to absolve teachers of responsibility. Hutchinson and Torres (1994) expand on, instead of participating in the decisions that have to be made about what to teach and how to do so, teachers feel confident and secure in their belief that the wise and virtuous people who produced the textbook knew what meet their students' needs, abilities and interests. But, unfortunately, this is rarely the case.

It must be said that textbooks clearly survive as they meet certain learners' needs, therefore we have to take a wider perspective on what today's learners needs are. It seems a truism to say that today's students grew up online; they have spent their entire lives surrounded by and using technology devices, which as a result they seem different from the previous generations. Gajek(2013) points out that today's students are not different but the digital technology they have access to has changed dramatically. It enables them to use their smart phones and tablets to access and store information. More seriously, with the more diverse learning materials and tools that are now available digitally, students' reliance on paper textbooks is open to question. In other words, with the digitisation of learning materials, an interesting question might be, can a textbook published in print form still be a necessary teaching learning guide and a crucial

information source used in classrooms ?Put it simply, can they survive in the digital era?

Far from being a problem, having access to virtual classrooms, digital textbooks, and other online learning tools may improve and lead to better student learning outcomes(Moya et al. 2011), but their selection of well-designed reliable resources might prove problematic. Learners are much more independent in the online world; setting their own set of social norms and rules without guide and supervision and therein lies the role of paper textbooks.

A textbook has a vital positive role and its importance becomes greater in the periods of change (Hutchinson and Torres, 199 T4).Role and content of paper textbooks are to be updated conveniently, they must be designed to make the two colliding worlds(digital /student's world vs. school world) coexist through enhancing values and norms of the digital environment. Having recognized this, we might reasonably expect that school textbooks not only survive but thrive.

3. Digital citizenship

Certainly, it is true that citizenship has become a very important concept in education, but perhaps surprisingly, the concept of 'citizenship' itself has always been a fuzzy one, it has been challenged from different quarters and it can mean different things to different people. However what is meant by the fundamental concept '*citizenship*', it appears to comprise a number of points concerning what makes a citizen (Weinstock, D. 2001).

According to (Al Qahtani, 2010), citizenship means the individual's belonging to the homeland in which s/he lives, sharing the same rights and duties of other citizens. Although the importance of the two values 'rights and duties' is acknowledged in this definition, the core values associated with the concept 'citizenship' are hotly disputed. Bearing in mind how reaching consensus over a set of citizenship values has been difficult, most recent studies about citizenship education, be it local, national or international (global) citizenship, highlight these concepts: democracy, rights, responsibilities, tolerance, respect, diversity and community (Kerr, D. 2003).Consistent with this, this quotation, cited in Lawten et, al.(2000:3) appears to be answering questions which might be asked

about citizenship teaching: "*Citizenship gives pupils the knowledge, skills and understanding to play an effective role in society at local, national and international levels...*" (From the prefatory page to the Citizenship Order, DFEE, 1999).

Whilst we speak convincingly of the need to citizenship education, what is of essence hitherto is the question of teaching citizenship in the latest developments and innovations in digital (online) technology. Suffice it to say, citizenship has a strong relation with the digital world, it gives pupils the knowledge, skills and understanding to play an effective role in society *online*; at local, national and international level. It prepares them to be good digital citizens, using the words of Mossberger et al. (2008:1), digital citizenship is the ability to participate in society online.

In his book 'Digital Citizenship at Schools, Mike Ribble (2011) identified nine appropriate elements to prepare students for the optimal use of technology.

1. Digital access: it means full electronic participation in society. Because not all students have access to digital tools, online opportunities should be equally available to them;

2. Digital commerce: the electronic selling and buying of goods. Students should be educated about smart economy/ commerce and smart consumption. They have to be informed about the issues they may face when using insecure shopping websites (fraud, sensitive information, ...);

3. Digital communication: The electronic exchange of information. When using new social networking sites (email, facebook, twitter,...) and other communication methods, students need to think about what and how to say, need to be aware that even after information is deleted it continues to live on in cyberspace;

4. Digital literacy: the process of teaching/learning about technology and the use of technology. Using new technologies at students' fingertips in the appropriate manner is one of the most important aspects of digital literacy. Important issues also are evaluating electronic sources, their security, accuracy and truthfulness of their contents as well as exploring and developing online learning;

5.Digital etiquette: the electronic standards of conduct or procedure. Students should realize how their use of technology affects others; teachers then are in better positions to teach them appropriate etiquette (respect the other, no prejudice/stereotypes...);

6.Digital law: the electronic responsibility for actions and deeds. Students need to be taught about what is appropriate, inappropriate and even illegal when posting or accessing information on the internet is a necessity. There is also a need to teach anti-cybercrimes laws and penalties imposed upon illegal use of technology (plagiarism, piracy,...);

7.Digital responsibilities and rights: those requirements and freedoms extended to everyone in a digital world. Students need to understand the difference between what is required from them or what should be done to be members of the digital society and what is possible for them to enjoy the benefits. In other words, there can be rights in the digital society only if there are responsibilities;

8.Digital health and wellness: physical and psychological well-being in a digital technology world. This element is about raising students' awareness of the physical and psychological risks inherent in using digital technology;

9.Digital security: the electronic precautions to guarantee safety. Student had better taught how to protect their electronic data and more particularly sensitive information by using antivirus software, digital security systems...and so on.

4. Method and Tools

With the educational reform undertaken in Algeria, citizenship education has been given worth attention mainly in primary and middle school textbooks of civic and Islamic education. These textbooks are preparing students to be good responsible citizens. They are teaching them the rules of their society. Nevertheless, are these textbooks preparing students to be good responsible digital citizens? Are they teaching them the rules of the

digital world? This in fact entails a critical appraisal of digital citizenship values embedded in them.

On this basis, central to this study are Algerian second-generation textbooks of civic education currently used in teaching third and fourth year middle school students. The content of these textbooks are analysed to identify the extent to which they succeed in incorporating the nine digital citizenship values identified by Mike Ribble (2011).

This study uses content analysis as a mixed method that combines both quantitative and qualitative techniques (Krippendorff, 2013). We first identified units of analysis, be it a sentence, picture or a diagram. Then, a quantitative analysis consisted of making frequency of the abovementioned nine elements and illustrating them in tables. Each table is followed by a descriptive qualitative analysis.

5. Results and Discussion

The analysis of data is according to the order of the abovementioned nine values of digital citizenship:

Table .1. Frequency of the use of the concept ‘digital citizenship’:

	Third year	Fourth year
Explicit	0	0
Implicit	0	0

The table shows the clear absence of the concept ‘digital citizenship’ in second generation textbooks of civic education currently used in teaching third and fourth year middle school students.

Table .2: Frequency of ‘digital access’

	Third year	Fourth year

Better connectivity with reliable source of online learning	4	0
Encouraging technology in and out of classrooms	0	0
Planning programmes for online equal opportunities	0	0

Looking at the data displayed in table (2), it can be easily observed that the only item that is embedded in third year textbook of civic education is the inclusion of some reliable links to websites.

Introducing online shopping	0	0
Raising awareness of possible consequences of virtual merchandise	0	0
Providing online commercial policies	0	0
Identifying safer reliable and legitimate commercial websites	0	0

Table .3:Frequency of ‘digital commerce’

Regarding the concept ‘digital commerce’, the total absence of its elements is noted.

Table .4:Frequency of ‘digital communication’

Encouraging the use of digital communication for learning	0	1
Teaching appropriate behaviours when using it	0	0

Drawing attention to the possibility of retrieving their deleted communication	0	0
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A look at the entire results of each item shows that item number one is embedded only once in fourth year textbook of civic education.

Table .5:Frequency of ‘digital literacy’

Presenting the digital basics: browsers, emails, download engines...	0	0
Evaluating online websites (content, truthfulness and security)	0	0
Exploring and developing online learning	0	0

Table .6:Frequency of ‘digital etiquette’

Showing the negative effect digital technology may have on others	0	0
Introducing electronic ethics (respect the others, tolerance, constructive criticism...)	0	0

Table 7:Frequency of ‘digital law’

Teaching what is illegal when posting or accessing information	0	0
Including anti-cybercrimes laws and penalties imposed upon illegal use of technology (hacking, identity theft, plagiarism, piracy,...);	0	0

Table 9:Frequency of ‘digital Rights and Responsibilities’

Providing examples of digital rights	0	0
Discussing membership within groups and what	0	0

is required for the good of these groups		
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Table 9:Frequency of ‘digital health and wellness’

Raising awareness of the physical and psychological risks inherent in using digital technology	0	0
Highlighting the possibility of other negative effects	0	0

Table 10:Frequency of ‘security’

Spreading the culture of digital security	0	0
Educating students about informing parents, teachers or the security authorities about any threatening online behavior (hacking, identity, photos theft....)	0	0

The most astonishing finding in the analysis of textbooks of civic education currently used to teach third and fourth year middle school students is the absolute absence of these digital citizenship values: digital literacy, digital etiquette, digital law, digital Rights and Responsibilities, digital health and wellness and digital security, shown respectively in tables 5,6,7,8,9 and 10.

6. Conclusion

Digital citizenship issues are inevitable, they have become the basic needs of today’s students and schools have to find ways to deal with them. Well-designed properly used textbooks can provide an excellent vehicle for teaching students values of the digital world and more importantly preparing them to be good digital citizens on social networking sites. The present study investigated the successful incorporation of digital citizenship values already identified by Mike Ribble (2011) in Algerian second generation textbooks of civic education currently used in teaching third and fourth year middle school students. Using mixed content analysis, these values were examined with regard to their presence in sentences, pictures,

diagrams and exercises. The findings in general showed the clear and total absence of the concept 'digital citizenship and its elements. We could not find the core values identified by Mike Ribble (2011) covered in these textbooks. Therefore, to improve the quality of future textbooks of civic education, this study calls for the immediate attention of educators and researchers and recommends integrating the term 'digital citizenship' in educational civic lessons. Clearly, digital values should be given enough space in texts, pictures, diagrams and exercises that feature values of the 21st citizen.

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¹In his article (2001) "Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants", Prensky made a compelling argument that today's students have an inborn technological competence, they have been brought up surrounded and interacted with digital technologies.