

Abstract

This investigation belongs to the Doctorship area of Child Studies, within the domain of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).

Technology changes educational reality, but it isn't the only agent of transformation. (Fielding & Lee, 1998). Being a complex and multi-fold reality, the aim of this investigation is to study the intervening factors in the process of using ICT in learning activities, mainly of language and of the connections among them, a process that will lead to the creation of a substantive theory.

Fieldwork included mainly *writing activities*, most of all with *word processor*, but *conventional means* were also used; students were still engaged in some *Web research of information activities* and in *oral communication /conversation* through *videoconference*. It went on for two school years in two different schools – a Primary and a Basic school (age levels 10-12) – and for a year in a Secondary school. There were three sources of data collection – observation, interviews to students and comments from involved teachers. For data treatment and analyses several techniques suggested by *grounded theory* were used, supported by the qualitative data analysis software, *NUD*IST*.

This study lies within the qualitative investigation paradigm and there is an option for *methodological eclecticism* (Shanahan & Newman, 1997). However, the mainstream line is the *grounded theory*, trying to create knowledge, building theory grounded in the data that are systematically derived from practice (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1995; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1997). For these authors, investigation has its starting point with an area of study, in this particular case *Children, Technologies and Learning* and whatever is relevant for this area shall emerge throughout the study.

The results show inter-relationships manifested in every proposition, of propositions among themselves and of the connections between the central proposition and the others. This network of correlations, the centre of the substantive theory, is complex because the studied educational situations are complex too. From that complexity it clearly emerges that **the interaction of these students with their pairs, with their teachers and with ICT, contributes for the development of their competence in communicating**. This being the central proposition, it is therefore, the centre of the substantive theory.