THE IMPACT OF CHANGE ON SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

Ph.D. Student, Elena PIRVAN (OPRESCU)
”Valahia” University of Târgovişte, Romania
E-mail: teodorao@yahoo.com
Postdoctoral researcher, Georgiana -Tatiana BONDAC
”Valahia” University of Târgovişte, Romania
E-mail: georgianabondac@yahoo.com

Abstract: The pandemic has caused an unprecedented shift to the online environment in most areas of life, and education was no exception. Since students all over the world have had to stay at home, the use of digital alternatives to classroom teaching has increased, thus determining a continuous improvement of teaching staff for a high-performance instructional-educational act. Therefore, the purpose of the article is to find an answer to the question "Is the change caused by the Pandemic in education, from the point of view of technology and digitization, advantageous?".
Keywords: change, improvement, school environment, digitization.
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1. The impact of the pandemic on education

The COVID-19 pandemic has significant repercussions not only from a health and economic point of view, but also from a social point of view, especially from an educational point of view. This is a double crisis: an educational crisis related to school closures and a general economic crisis that also affects the education sector. In particular, the closure of educational institutions in connection with the pandemic leads to the suspension or slowing down of educational processes and an increase in inequality in this field.

There is no doubt that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused a major change in the use of "digital" technologies in education, and the main question is whether this change is only temporary or whether it will be perpetuated and further developed by education staff. The impact of the crisis caused by COVID-19 on digitization in education has been significant. All education systems in Europe resorted to some form of online education during the initial period of the pandemic.

The reaction to the changes brought about by the pandemic has been generally positive in most education systems, although some groups of learners have not enjoyed the benefits equally. The educational institutions, but also the teaching and management staff responded well to this change and demonstrated a positive response, accepting the change, so that the educational process continues.

Although many positive effects have been observed following the pandemic, a number of challenges have also been reported, including the different levels of preparation of educational institutions for the transition to online education, the lack of digital infrastructure, the lack of digital skills, but also the volume of overwork and pedagogical concerns. Therefore, there is a risk that the digitization experience in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic will become a missed opportunity. In addition, the question arises as to which of the digital education practices will be retained by educational institutions and which will be discarded.

These challenges are mainly related to the negative social impact and costs of digitization, as well as the increase in workload and the emergence of health and safety issues.

In contrast, there was less consensus on the main opportunities presented by digital education, including: more possibilities for individual learning and encouraging learners to adopt a self-disciplined learning process; increasing access to education and promoting

inclusion; creating more engaging learning experiences for learners at risk of dropping out; a small group considered the reduction of administrative costs to be the main advantage of using digital tools

The use of digital technologies in educational systems is widespread, but there are differences from one educational setting to another. It appears that digital tools are little used in the face-to-face educational process, being only partially used in teaching and learning practices or related assessment processes.

In general, it seems that teaching staff are more willing to use digital tools. However, a significant gap was found in terms of professional training, as the teaching staff did not benefit from effective and quality professional training in pedagogic methods in the digital environment. In particular, a significant gap was found in the provision of quality professional training courses on the use of the Internet and communication tools in online and/or blended learning.

Another important aspect is related to those who develop and provide the digital tools and devices used in the online/blended teaching process in the education sector.

Private companies play an essential role, with little involvement of decision-makers in the educational system in the process of developing and providing such technologies.

Looking ahead, the private sector will continue to play a major role in the development of digital tools for the education sector. This raises questions about how the influence of this sector on digitization in education could be mitigated through a careful and well-thought-out use of digital tools, an extremely important aspect across Europe.

There was a general consensus among the stakeholders consulted on the types of investments needed to ensure the optimal development of digital education. These include investments in developing the skills and competences of teaching staff, digital infrastructure and tools for learners and teachers.

As for the digital skills of teaching staff, it was found that the self-assessed level of understanding of the concept of digital skills is very high. However, it does not seem to be translated into practice: not all teaching staff actually have extensive digital skills, and this aspect requires a more in-depth analysis. This situation should come as no surprise, especially when coupled with the findings that there are no uniform support structures and processes to support the development of digital skills.

There is a clear need for teachers at all stages of their careers to have access to quality digital skills development programs that give them the confidence and knowledge they need to use effectively in teaching to students.

This appears to be related to the quality and professional development aspect in the digital context, as well as the need for quality support for teachers to develop and update their digital skills.

Also, the extent to which these training needs are met shows a significant socioeconomic gap: teachers who live and work in rural and poorer areas appear to be at a disadvantage. These findings are particularly alarming and suggest that further research and action is needed in this regard, as the basic digital skills of educational staff are at stake.

Finally, education systems have successfully transitioned to distance learning modalities during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, in reality, educational staff need much more support so that they can properly incorporate digital technologies and associated teaching methods into classroom practice.

This will be considered an essential priority in the short and long term, as it is expected that digitization will increasingly become an integral part of all aspects of the educational process, including supporting teaching and learning activities.

2. Disadvantaged areas (where people live below the poverty line) and digital skills

In Romania, the pandemic had a major negative impact on children from disadvantaged areas. The figures show us that we have reached more than 1.7 million children who live at risk of poverty or social exclusion.

First of all we look at the financial resources the family has to survive in relation to the monthly basket that should be allocated for a decent life. Practically, these families live with quite limited resources, which most of the time do not allow them to cover the costs of food, utilities, rent, if necessary.

In Romania, the number of children in poverty is higher than the number of adults in poverty and it increased a lot in the last year, it increased by almost six percent, reaching over 1.7 million.

In vulnerable environments, in poor communities, the problems are very diverse. And digital transformation in education has become something extremely difficult to do in the pandemic.

Digital transformation in education, because the didactic process is not simply taken and moved online, it must be adapted to other benchmarks, because children's attention has other parameters online, exposure to devices again requires another way of segmentation of the content, implies even more autonomy, somehow the teachers have to give more freedom to the children to solve certain problems by themselves.

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The story with the Internet is very complicated, because there are regions where the signal is very weak.

That's why the school was an ideal space for this digitization process to happen, in the context where there was openness on the part of the school and on the part of the community. When the pandemic came, the data of the problem changed a lot, the location of this digitization is in every child's home, and there are multiple challenges. Overcrowded spaces where families with 5-7 children live in less than 15 square meters.

This whole issue of digitization must be approached very carefully, but with a lot of patience and attention to each child, it is possible. It opened up a very beautiful universe to the children, but still the school must be this space, which also gives them the ability to concentrate, because in families it is extremely complicated.

Almost everything that happened during the pandemic completely turned the entire educational system upside down and for children from vulnerable families, it generated a deep regression, especially in the context where they, not having access to school, had to learn from home - when your parents can't support you, you can't connect, you don't have privacy.

In these areas, pictures of the blackboard in the classroom were being sent on Whats App, this means digitization for many of the schools in these areas.

Pictures of the blackboard, on which the teacher wrote with chalk, were sent on Whats App to the parents.

Along the way it has been to develop the digital skills of the teaching staff, so that they can go further and transfer this to the way they relate to children and develop their potential.

With a consistent investment in education, I think our future will look very good, because that will present a lot of opportunities for the whole society, not just for the future young adults of this country.

3. Directions for digital education

Digital transformation has changed society and the economy, having an ever-increasing impact on everyday life. However, before the COVID-19 pandemic, its impact on education and training was much more limited.

The pandemic has shown that it is essential to have an education and training system ready for the digital age.

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the need for more developed digital capabilities in education and training.

Moreover, it has led to the accentuation of existing challenges and inequalities between those who have access to digital technologies and those who do not, including people from disadvantaged backgrounds.
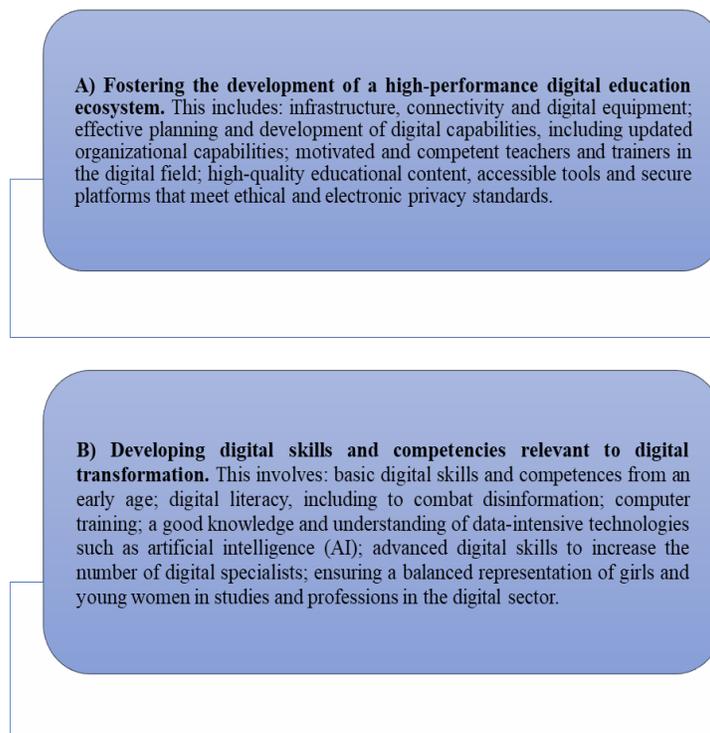
In addition, the pandemic has revealed certain challenges for education and training systems related to the digital capabilities of education and training institutions, teacher training and general levels of digital skills and competences.

The pandemic has accelerated an already existing trend towards online and hybrid learning.

This transition has revealed new and innovative ways in which students and teachers organize their learning and teaching activities and interact in a more personal and flexible way online.

These changes require an intensive and coordinated effort at EU level to support education and training systems in addressing the challenges identified and accentuated by the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, a long-term vision of the future directions for digital education must be proposed.

Fig. no. 1. Directions for digital education

A) **Fostering the development of a high-performance digital education ecosystem.** This includes: infrastructure, connectivity and digital equipment; effective planning and development of digital capabilities, including updated organizational capabilities; motivated and competent teachers and trainers in the digital field; high-quality educational content, accessible tools and secure platforms that meet ethical and electronic privacy standards.

B) **Developing digital skills and competencies relevant to digital transformation.** This involves: basic digital skills and competences from an early age; digital literacy, including to combat disinformation; computer training; a good knowledge and understanding of data-intensive technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI); advanced digital skills to increase the number of digital specialists; ensuring a balanced representation of girls and young women in studies and professions in the digital sector.

Source: Dalu, A-M., Noveanu G., (2020). Back to School post-COVID. România. August 2020. Disponibil online: http://www.ise.ro/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Raport-Back-to-School2020-2021.pdf.

The Internet, the digital environment and virtual reality have become increasingly influential phenomena in everyday life, the tendency of users of digital technologies being to substitute a large part of classic activities with new means, regardless of whether it is about spending free time, communication and information or professional and commercial activities, adapted to the digital age in which we find ourselves.

Moreover, the effects of extensive use of digital devices and applications induce stress syndrome. And this is all the more so since people feel this stress not only in their personal lives, but also in collectives, at the workplace, where digital skills are frequently required.

4. Conclusions

The Covid-19 pandemic crisis was a challenge. But it also offers an opportunity to review strategic approaches to the use of digital to improve public services, an opportunity that is achievable by making individual rights the basis of digital transformation. As digital tools and data inevitably integrate into our lives, individual rights should be the central pillar for policies related to digital technologies.

The digital divide is one of the main problems highlighted by the pandemic. It is composed of three main gaps between those who can and those who cannot benefit from digital tools: absence of internet connection, lack of an appropriate device, poor digital literacy.

Even though a stable broadband internet connection is available to a large part of the population, it was not enough to guarantee the exercise of individual rights for a significant part of the population.

Internet access is often linked to classical rights representing a digital projection of them. But the crisis has changed this perception, showing the profound impact that lack of access has on political space and socio-economic rights.

The right to access the Internet is no longer just an appendage to freedom of expression in a broad sense, but is a right in itself. The crisis has shown that the right to access the Internet possesses the human rights characteristics of universality, indivisibility, interdependence and interrelation, as it is indispensable for the full exercise of human rights. It doesn't make sense to have rights if we didn't have access, and vice versa.

As such, the crisis confirmed the UN's decade-long policy of declaring internet access a human right. So is the trend of many countries that have codified it in their legislation. For example, Greece, Ecuador, Portugal, Mexico and, more recently, Georgia and Sudan have regulated access to the Internet as a fundamental right at the constitutional level, although in all cases it appears to have emancipated itself from the protection of freedom of expression.

Other countries have codified it at the sub-constitutional level: Finland, Estonia, Spain. And in France and Costa Rica, a "right to the Internet" has been affirmed by constitutional judges.

However, the pandemic has shown that asserting the right to access the Internet becomes meaningless in the absence of digital literacy or the absence of appropriate devices. Along with access to the Internet, access to appropriate devices and knowledge of their use are extremely important for the exercise of individual rights.

More problematic is digital literacy. This must be a key component of education and everyone must be educated about digital technologies. Government should consider organizing and assisting citizens in using digital devices, networks and services.

Reforms towards digitization raise many questions, especially for citizens who are less familiar with information technologies. Therefore, the government could consider

creating ad-hoc information centers and organizing appropriate courses to train and assist citizens during the digital transition.

The complexity and topicality of the access issue suggests the need for the adoption of significant legal and social reforms, such as the codification of a "right to the Internet" in the Constitution. The codification of the right to access the internet, devices and knowledge as a social right, which involves the active intervention of public authorities to guarantee them, would be a significant step towards ensuring the exercise of individual rights in the digital sphere.

Moreover, it would be consistent with the fundamental principle of "leaving no one behind" of the UN 2030 agenda for sustainable development, which seeks to strengthen human rights for all without discrimination on any grounds. Digital devices are part of our culture, increase our productivity, simplify our lives and are a great entertainment factor.

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