European Proceedings of
Educational Sciences
EpES

www.europeanproceedings.com

e-ISSN: 2672-815X

DOI: 10.15405/epes.22032.22

ERD 2021
9th International Conference Education, Reflection, Development

ORGANIZING TEACHING ACTIVITIES THROUGH CAPITALIZING EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES IN THE ONLINE

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Abstract

The study "Organizing teaching activities through capitalizing educational resources in the online" aims in the applicative-practical dimension to emphasize that under the influence of covid-19, the educational environment is reorganized in the virtual space, and the communication of the educational binomial under the influence of the covid-19 pandemic in the last year and a half transferred to cyberspace. From this point of view, the organization and development of teaching activities through technology and the Internet have been regulated by changes in the legislative, educational and curricular framework and by the approval of the framework methodology. Teachers in teaching-learning-digital assessment required were a key factor in streamlining teaching activities through the use of technology and the Internet. The reorganization of the educational approach has become one of the major current objectives, because new technologies do not only provide the environment for the educational act, but stimulate learning to contribute to modeling cognitive and metacognitive learning strategies, generating alternative behavior and correcting self-regulation deficits.

Keywords: Digital education, digital competences, learning communities, open educational resources, teachers

https://doi.org/10.15405/epes.22032.22
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eISSN: 2672-815X

1. Introduction

Social dynamics within the present global situation under the influence of COVID-19 have made us rethink and reconfigure the didactic field radically. *Face to face* interaction, traditionally speaking, where both the teachers and pupils are in the same classroom, as well as their communication, has, in the last year and a half, been shifted into the cyberspace. On-line didactic activities have been brought under regulations, both nationally and internationally, and ministries have demanded that the legal, as well as pedagogical and curricular aspects be revised and replaced with the adequate methodology. Said methodology is supposed to efficiently substitute for the temporarily critical sanitary situation, while new alternatives are still sought after, this because "technology can create a new state of being… online intimacy is real, but it operates in a new dynamic" (Turkle et al., 2017, as cited in Weinberg & Rolnick, 2020, p. 17). Back when courses were done face-to-face, a teacher could rely on their pedagogical discourse and planned creative strategy in order to actively maintain the children's attention. Now, however, in the new virtual environment, communication is limited and the teacher must do additional efforts and make good use of their skills so as to assure that the didactic initiative reaches their students through the often-challenging digital medium (Order No.5545/2020). Online didactic activities demands that school institutions invest in stimulating the teachers' digital creative abilities. In this sense, responsible entities have made courses nationally available for teachers to upgrade and update their digital skills, so as to keep up with the increased demand for one using the computer and internet. These regard to technologically and informationally perfect the learning experience through means available, but also train teachers to efficiently plan digital resources and fruitfully make use of the multimedia in problem solving and planning. (Cuc, 2013, 2014, 2019a, 2019b, 2019c, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c). Within a short period of time, manuals and guides that promoted good practices came out, meant to help personalia adapt to the new working environment, but also redefine the new outcome of *digital education* at a national level (Albulescu & Catalano, 2021; Ceobanu et al., 2020; Valkemburg & Piotrowski, 2017).

2. Problem statement

The current virtual reality we live in shows serious consequences when it comes to planned individual learning – for both teachers and students -, and, being slightly limited by the digital platforms available, the new learning environments differ severely from the authentic classroom experience. The didactic framework built in a virtual classroom simulates learning experiences mediated by artificially generated on various applications and websites. Given this context, terminology itself must be revised: one can now talk about digital learning and the opportunities that digital communication partakers get through efficiently monitoring their school performance; the ability to plan screen time and learning tasks by being well motivated and stimulated; acknowledging new opportunities for personal and professional development granted by the online media, but also the ability to sort and solve challenges within the online environment through high degree of commitment and availability towards cooperation, collaboration, teamwork and professional networking within the institution, meso/macro system. When trying to create a symbiotic connection between education and technology, the educator shall take into

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account careful planning and organizing of their activities on the online platforms of choice, efficiently generating didactic resources and content – such as eLearning materials -, as well as making these easily accessible students by making sure they respect quality assuring standards and are in accordance to the regulations for the management of didactic activities (Cuc, 2013, 2014, 2019a, 2019b, 2019c, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c). These are demands that the new particular way of digitally educating must serve, through actively participating, customizing and adapting the means of teaching according to students' learning methods and abilities.

3. Research questions

Having taken into account the ever changing dynamic in the multi-levelled educational context, the present ascertaining research is based upon the following question: To what degree is the instructive-pedagogical process enhanced and, with that, scholar performance of the educated, through making use of digital materials, tools and open educational resources, implicitly?

4. Purpose of the Study

For this Net-Generation, or Digital Natives, the pedagogical act is perceived as an educational partnership between the tutor and the student. Having experienced this past year, for educators coming from both the urban and rural areas, it turns out that maintaining the same conservative approach to teaching becomes less and less effective in the school class. This is due to the fact that this particular generation of children can be defined by traits such as their freedom of taking action, solving and investigating problems into detail, being more open towards cooperation and collaboration, vigilance in taking initiative, firmness in decision making, as well as flexibility and high adaptability to change – when regarding planning out teaching activities in the online space, all these particularities demand strategic creativity, active digital communication and partaking, cooperation and collaboration, and also the willingness to develop a positive online identity on the educational platforms used, within the context of facilitating digital wellbeing (Ceobanu et al., 2020, pp. 29-30, pp. 41-42; Cuc, 2013, 2014, 2019a, 2019b, 2019c, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c).

The aim of the present study consists of thorough analysis of open educational resources in organizing and planning out pedagogical activities with the help of technology and the internet.

5. Research Methods

5.1. Research objectives

A) Studying to which degree do educators use open educational resources in organizing and planning out activities with the help of technology and the internet.

B) Highlighting what solutions are available for educators to help further improve the adaptation of open educational resources in their didactical approach.

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5.2. Research hypothesis

For the present observative research paper, the following items have been taken into account:

Whether or not, within the planning out and organizing didactic activities with the help of technology and the internet, the rational, systematic use of open educational resources can lead to the improvement of the instructive-educational process, and thereby, further developing technological competences among the teachers.

5.3. Methodology

With regards to selecting the research subjects represented by teachers and substitute teachers in pre-university schooling, the following was taken into account: initial training as well as continual training, didactic degree, completion of mandatory psycho-pedagogical training sessions, seniority in the education system, seniority within the institution in which the teacher works or substitutes, the social and cultural background where the educated come from, as well as the urban or rural area where the scholar institution is located.

Therefore, 30% of respondents are teachers who have graduated a pedagogical vocational high school, 23% are primary school teachers, 21% are PPPE graduates, 20% are preschool teachers, 2% are PPPE teachers, 2% secondary school teachers and 2% are high school teachers. As regarding the respondents' seniority at their workplace, 28% have been working there between 0 and 2 years, 17% work under permanent hire, 14% have level I seniority, 13% have been working between 2 and 5 years, 8% are signed up for level II seniority, 7% are signed up for permanent hire, 5% are signed up for seniority level I, 5% have between 5-10 years of seniority and 3% have level II seniority. Thus, we notice that the sample of people is rather dispersed regarding working place seniority. When it comes to the institutions, 47% of them are located in the rural area, 37% in cities, for 7% of respondents, the schools are situated downtown, for 5% of them, the school is within the neighbourhood, 3% of the institutions integrate children with special educational needs and 1% of institutions cover underprivileged children. Thus, one can see that the respondents were rather balanced, with participants from both the rural and the urban area.

6. Findings

After having completed the research on educators valuing educational resources with the help of technology and the internet, the following data has been collected, as follows: for the didactic activities, a laptop device is most frequently used (48%), followed by the smartphone (38%). Tablets are used in 8% of the cases, while the same goes for the personal computer. 5% of respondents have been given their gadgets by the schools and 1% do not own technological devices. According to the data provided by this study, we may conclude that, for most, the laptop and the smartphone are the devices of choice for the didactic activities. On owning the required devices for efficiently endorsing teaching activities (Figure 1), 71% of the educated (preschoolers, students) possess such gadgets, while 15% do not do so and 14% refrain. We can, therefore, observe that the majority of students do have the necessary devices they need

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for participating in learning activities. (Bocoș et al., 2015; Chiș & Bocoș, 2015; Chis & Grec, 2017; Chiș & Oltean, 2019; Chiș et al., 2019; Simion & Chis, 2019).

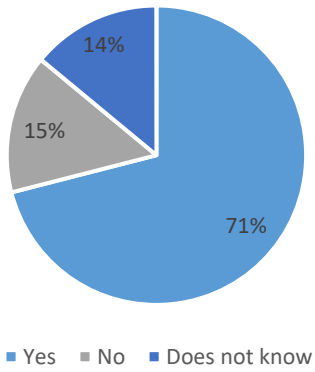

Figure 1. Possession of required devices

As regarding the improvement of personal technical skills of the respondents (Figure 2), we can find that 58% say they have good technical abilities, 21% state they have very good abilities, 11% are still learning, 8% are satisfied with their skills and 2% consider themselves dissatisfied with their capacities. Thereupon, we notice that the grand majority of participants have good or very good abilities in using the computer and/or the internet.

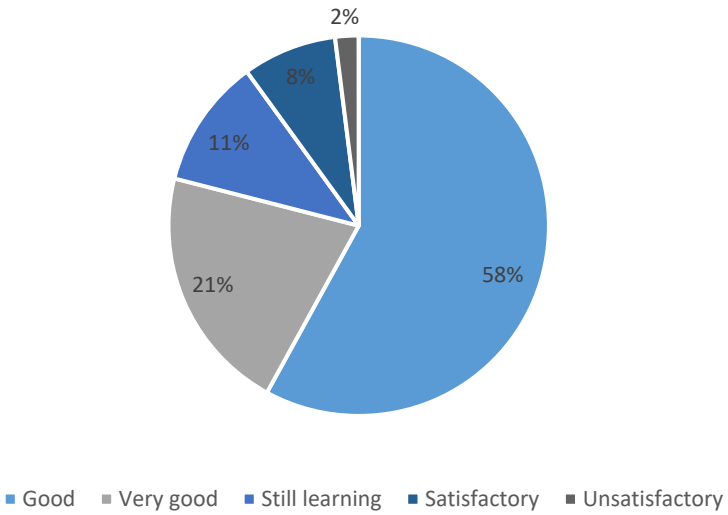

Figure 2. Technical skills

70,6% of respondents have accessed courses or instructional materials for helping them improve their digital knowledge and 29,4% have not looked into any additional information on this (Figure 3). Out of those participants who have used such instructional courses, the majority have opted for those offered

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by the TSH[1] training institution, followed by those from the DSI[2] and an even smaller percentage have been offered support from the universities, NGOs and other institutions. Therefore, we one can say that most respondents do have access to training courses and additional materials for developing their technological skills.

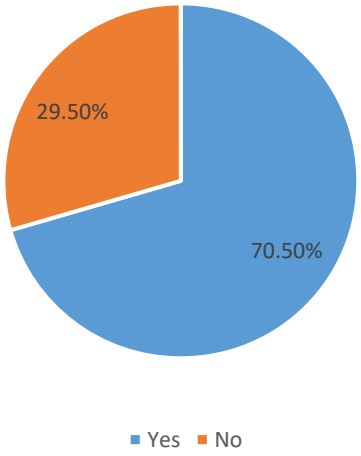

Figure 3. Access to additional technical training

On the educational resources used throughout the entire teaching-learning-evaluating act in the online and tech environment, the following statistics have been collected: 32,8% draw up their own didactic resources, 30% used preexisting materials, from learning platforms, 25,7% change or adapt materials found online, 9,8% use already existing sources and 1,7% refrain from answering. The main criteria taken into account for selecting the resources are, as follows: suitability for the particular psycho-pedagogical needs, distinctive for each class of children and specific age (20%), opportunity to streamline the teaching-learning-evaluating process (15%), flexibility to adapt said resources to the class's needs (14%), accessibility in reaching and using them (11%), accuracy and reliability on the particular topic (11%), facilitates and supports the learning environment (10%), promotes proactive and interactive partaking (9%) and 1% refrain from answering.

In addition, the most frequently used platforms and applications for online classes are: Google Classroom, Zoom, Twinkle, Prezi, Jamboard, Kahoot, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, Facebook, WhatsApp and YouTube. Therefore, one can conclude that, for the most part, the respondents either create their own didactic materials for their courses or use resources taken off web pages or scholarly platforms. Whereas, when speaking about the selection criteria, most of the subjects do modify and adapt said materials to the children's psycho-pedagogical needs, preferences and their knowledge, so long as these are accessible and viable for the teacher's use. Among the didactic materials and techniques used in online activities, worth naming are: digital storytelling (20,7%), images (20,5%), interactive roleplaying

[1] Teaching Staff House
[2] District School Inspectorate

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(15,6%), movies (11,6%), games (11%), experiments (10,6%), virtual trips (4,5%), electronic story books (1,5%) and others (4%) (Bocoș et al., 2015; Chiș & Bocoș, 2015; Chis & Grec, 2017; Chiș & Oltean, 2019; Chiș et al., 2019; Simion & Chis, 2019). We notice that digital storytelling, images and interactive roleplaying are preferred activities among the study participants. Planning these online activities on the internet normally follows the same steps as traditional planning of classroom activities, as they were face to face, namely, that of adapting the resources to the class's subject theme, followed by elaborating a lesson plan based on the selected materials. These are done in accordance to the learning targets and objectives, either by creating personalized materials or by using already existing ones off the internet, integrating these in the lesson plan and mending them according to the students' level of knowledge and abilities as well as providing a learning-friendly environment for them to work in. During a class, these activities are, on average, held for 20-minute time frames. When regarding the management of educational resources, 20% of participants say that their role is that of a mediator between students and pedagogical resources, 18,3% consider their role that of a tutor, 17,2% consider themselves as planners, 13% are evaluators, 11,3% see themselves as guides, 10% practicians, 9% think they are facilitators for their students, while 1,2% have other positions. Most educators feel they play the role of mediators, tutors or planners for the children's activities. For the most part, the respondents look at the selected educational resources as a tool helping them streamline the teaching-learning process – 40,4%, an instrument helping them make education more efficient – 26,6%, support in motivating the students take part in the activities – 25,6%, a substitute for the pedagogical act – 7,4%. Thus, we could highlight the fact that educational resources are, for most participants, seen as instruments helping them make teaching more efficient. (Bocoș et al., 2015; Chiș & Bocoș, 2015; Chis & Grec, 2017; Chiș & Oltean, 2019; Chiș et al., 2019; Simion & Chis, 2019).

7. Conclusion

The present study has meant to underline the need for continual training for teachers and educators in improving their technical abilities required for the challenges that may uprise now, with this new generation of students, so-called internet natives. We have also highlighted the emphasis that is put in implementing new pedagogical approaches, encouraging the children's interest for knowledge, improving their creativity and imagination, but also finding a deeper understanding for the needs and interests of Generation Z, as compared to previous ones. Even if, earlier on, at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, we still had reluctance or restraint from tutors in utilizing online educational resources, now, however, having gone through the experience, we have clearly notices that this generation's students poses significantly great technological abilities and, in order to fulfill their needs and requests, teachers must also pay effort into training their digital skills, in order to eliminate any difficulties or delays in understanding and properly operating the computer. That being so because technology and the internet can be, with the right use, a way to access valuable data, information and resources; by navigating the internet, one develops their abilities to analyze, filter and select information and can even find alternative solutions to problems or advice (Cuc, 2013, 2014, 2019a, 2019b, 2019c, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c; Ceobanu et al., 2020). Given this context, teachers have noticed how, in the virtual world, didactic discourse, dialog-based learning, constructive conversation or lesson presentations are not necessarily preferred by

the students who, often times, get either bored or lose focus. Rather, they prefer interactive didactic games for the optimal teaching-learning-evaluating activity, encouraging the students to use the computer for problem solving, putting together projects in which they digitally cooperate and collaborate or learn together online. In this sense, it is mandatory that educators understand the importance of responsibly training their abilities, including digital skills, in order to adapt suit the needs of the Z Generation. Even if the scholar situation differs so much from that of the previous years, the teachers' main objective must remain that of supporting their students and helping them build strong learning communities, efficiently adapted to the main goals of today's society.

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https://doi.org/10.15405/epes.22032.22
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