# Positive and Negative Aspects of New Technologies In Lifelong Education

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*Abstract:* - The aim of the present paper is the systematic study of the way(s) new technologies influence lifelong learning. Lifelong learning is associated with all sectors of human activities and exerts a positive influence on the individual, society, and economy. New technologies have enhanced learning procedures. Distance learning has been considerably developed all over the world and has been acknowledged as the most significant educational application of man-new technologies interaction. Furthermore, lifelong learning has been making extensive use of multimedia (audiovisual) and the internet. The object of the field study is a pilot model of e-learning for adults, implemented via the foundation of the Adult Distance Education and Training Centre (ADETC). The methodology adopted is based on the completion of questionnaires aiming at examining the degree of acceptance of a distance learning programme from all parties involved.

*Key-Words:* - New technologies, Lifelong Education, Remote Education.

## 1. Introduction

The present study constitutes an organized effort which aims to delimit the effects and the role of new technologies in the sector of lifelong education, but mainly to locate and criticize the positive and negative aspects of this role, in the frames of Knowledge Society, Information and Globalization.

More specifically, in the present study is attempted the determination of connection ways for new technologies with lifelong education, delimiting the positive and negative aspects, the critical regard of modern applications of new technologies in lifelong education in Greece and abroad, giving emphasis in the benefits but also in the likely problems of adaptation, as well as the analysis of empiric field study, so that the annotation of theoretical frame is developed and enriched with experiential data.

## 2. Connection of New Technologies and Lifelong Education.

Lifelong education is connected with all the areas of human activity and develops beneficial effects in the level of individual, society, economy [5].It contributes to the growth of cognitive potential and the critical deliberation of individuals, it strengthens the adoptive ability of society, it guards its unit and provides equality of opportunities while at the same time equips the workers with new dexterities. However, the conventional way of provision and concretization of lifelong education needs of additional and alternative methods [2].

Particularly, new technologies lend new possibilities in the training processes: internet, software, multimedia, simulators that encourage the interaction of human-to-new technologies, but also the easier withhold of new knowledge

and information management, the remote education that lends more opportunities of re-education or re-training, irrespectively of the educational level, sex, age, professional status, residence or work place, religion or social group, providing simultaneously the possibility of training process individualisation in time, place, rate and way of study, that is organized and ordered by the user himself, are the large libraries, mainly academic, which provide the readers the possibility of electronically accessing articles, magazines, books etc., circulating newspapers also in electronic form, making the diffusion of information easier. Even the artistic - aesthetic creation meets growth via the new technologies [8], while the digital elaboration of sound, pictures, texts and video converts radically the cultural expression.

The above digital educational activities that are often met in the educational processes, usually have a positive impact on the beneficiary, however they also create conceivable problems of adaptation. Below are analyzed the positive and negative aspects of new technologies in lifelong education, so that the benefits but also the problematic parameters are located.

## 2.1 Positive aspects of New Technologies in Lifelong Education

### 2.1.1 The remote education: characteristic traits and benefits

The remote education constitutes the most important educational application of interaction between human-to-new technologies. The basic characteristics [7], from which emerge the benefits and its positive sides, are: a) it is addressed in a larger number of trainees and does not result problems of classrooms and teaching spaces, covering to a great degree the educational wishes of the interested parties, b) the learning has individualised character as for the designing of study plan and evaluation of training course, the standing, the rhythm, the place that occurs, c) the training process has a student-oriented character, it's based on the principles of advisory communication, cooperativeness, interaction and active dialogue of factors via various systems electronic learning management, that ensure synchronous but also asynchronous communication, but also via viva voce-word common meetings, both on instructive and social aims, d) for the transport of training material, which is characterized by innovative attributes and forms, technical means are used (software,

internet, multimedia), e) the evaluation of performance is mainly based on adapted tests of self-assessment, in order that through the self-monitoring, the trainees lead to the extend of achieving the educational objectives.

The above characteristics of remote education led a lot of students, as Delling, Moore, Wedemeyer [4], to focus their attention in the dimension of "important independence" of the trainee towards to the instructor, and to mark that in this point is located the specific difference of remote education to conventional education.

In this way, it is given the opportunity in a big percentage of young people to educate themselves and to be trained in various new educational and labour environments, seeking with this way better employment, competitive advantage and more qualifications in life. Also, people older in age that wish to continue their studies or still to improve their knowledge and dexterities or change employment, after a long-lasting, sometimes, abstention from the educational proceedings in progress, have now the possibility to do so. But also the frail social groups, as People with Disabilities, minority groups etc., that don't have a lot of possibilities in training, seek via new technologies and they deserve an opportunity.

### 2.1.2 Use and exploitation of multimedia and applications of world web

The growth of computers gave the opportunity not only to the remote education but also in traditional in order to increase its quality and effectiveness. In this situation, plays an important part the use of teaching means [1], which is possible to be the following: audiovisual material, computers, internet, courses via internet, educational software, multimedia, teleteaching, printed material etc.

### 2.1.3 Applied policies in Greece. Special programs and initiatives

The convergence of information technologies and communications leads the developments to all the areas of world human activity. Simultaneously the needs for continuous and lifelong education and training delimit the challenges in the space of education. In this frame becomes a world effort for the incorporation of new technologies in education, so that it becomes accessible and available to citizens. The Academic Institutions, but also educational organisms of provision education to adults, by developing their double role as

educational and research institutions, act catalytically in the adoption of new technologies in the education process.

According to the Ministry of Economy and the General Secretariat for EITO, the training of the citizens on basic knowledge issues of information technologies, and the creation of digital literate society, constitutes objective that is connected immediately with the policy of training and education. The policy in education, owes to return from the creation of infrastructures, in their exploitation in the educational process and the creation of digital literate citizens, competitively to henceforth advanced countries.

In Greece important and decisive part in the remote education plays initially the operation of Greek Open University, the efforts of the traditional Greek Universities of Supreme Education for the acquisition of possibilities of remote education and their appointment in hybrid type Universities (dual-mode Universities), the Centre of Remote Training of Pedagogical Institute but also the recent operation of the Adult Distance Education and Training Centre (ADETC) of the General Secretariat of Adults Education. This last institution constitutes the reason of the research field growth that is presented later on the present study.

## 2.2 Negative aspects of New Technologies in Lifelong education
### 2.2.1 Social approach

The digital gap that is observed with regard to the growth of infrastructures and access in ICT, the ability of citizens and enterprises to use the ICT, both in the level of dexterities of final PC user and level of use of the technological equipment, eg mobile telephony, fax, electronic transactions or in the level of management the engaged various information, creates a worrying indicator for the Greek spectrum, while also the phenomenon of technophobia strengthens these conditions, resulting to the appearance of functional and technological illiteracy phenomena and in extension of social exclusion, specifically of the corruptible socially groups. From the other side, the use of new technologies creates problems in the individual's communication, as alienation and lack of social dexterities, which are difficult to replace with electronic conditions.

Consequently there is need to ensure access in ICT means for all citizens without exceptions,

while the most important cause of digital divergence between citizens lies in the fact that some have access in means of new technology while others have not, hence they don't have the possibility of developing the positive elements that offers the connection of new technologies with lifelong education.

### 2.2.2 Educational approach
#### 2.2.2.1 Remote education

The first basic problem in the remote education has to do with the adaptation of the trainee in a new way of learning. Trainees up to the moment they decide to be trained with the method of remote education meet a different style of communication and learning. This style presupposes that the instructor, from one hand, has the complete control and responsibility for the teaching flow and the activities of courses and the trainee, from the other hand, to faithfully follow any processes.

Remote education is a "solitary" form of education, which certainly requires high levels of self-discipline and maturity from the person who has chosen it. It requires self-confidence from the side of the trainees, so that they participate in spaces of asynchronous dialogue and develop the remote exchange of information.

Moreover, it is essential that the trainee is familiarized with the new technologies, so that he won't face technical problems with the use of PC.

Experts in the previous decades concluded that the use of new technologies has not turned out effective in education and training [3].

### 2.2.2.2 Lack of infrastructures and know-how of teachers

For more equitable and effective exploitation of the new technologies in lifelong education important role plays the section of material and technical infrastructures but also the know-how of the instructors. According to the Greek datum, and based on daily experience, this two sections usually fall short.

Specifically, it is observed a limited finance support by the state or co-financing by the European Union, so that the needs of schools or educational organisms in all the country are covered in special equipment and software or in upgrading the already existing.

From the other side, the traditional perceptions of certain teachers, the general negative attitude towards changes, the lack of initiatives reception for undertaking competences, the limited

essential attendance in the continuing training of practicing teachers, create problems of know-how lack and specialized educational personnel and hence limited capacity of flexibility and sensitization to the innovative educational conditions.

# 4. Field Study: Empiric data

## 4.1 The reason and object of research

The General Secretariat for Adults' Education of the Ministry of Education [9], created and pilot functions from the current year a model of electronic learning for adults. This undertaking, which supplements the traditional model of education for adults, is realised with the constitution of the Adult Distance Education and Training Centre (ADETC).

ADETC offers educational programs of 250 hours in annual duration, which lead to the reception of the "Certificate of Lifelong Education".

Concretely, the trainees of Information Technology and Economy and Administration constituted the sample of field study, which conducts with the use of a questionnaire and aim to present the acceptance degree of a remote education program from the trainees.

## 4.2 Research Conclusions

In the research overall took part 60 people from which the majority (90%) was aged between 18 - 40 years and the remained (10%) between 40 - 50 years. In the sample, men amount to the 35% and women to 65%, 40% of the retrained were married while 60% of them had also children.

In the question "How you would characterize your knowledge around computers?", 70% answered mediocre, 20% good and the 10% insufficient. The majority (80%) of the respondents would wish the benefit of material via internet, despite that only 30% had access in computer with an internet connection. This fact proves the positive attitude of the trainees and their will to be educated with the help of new technologies.

From the internet services, 40% of the trainees declared that knows how to use WWW, 50% declared that know the electronic mail and only 10% declared that knows how to use FTP.

Only a percentage of 2% of the retrained declared that allocates previous experience in remote education. It is important that 80% of the respondents believe that new forms of education can offer something positive, 20% declare ignorance, while no one declared negative

opinion. In agreement with the above is also found the answer in the question "How do you deal with the case of following-up a remote education program?", since 90% answered positively, 10% declared incurious attitude, while no one expressed negative attitude. It is, consequently, obvious that the trainees have positive attitude towards the application of a remote education program for their training, and recognize the likely benefits from its realisation and consequently that the tendency for its growth is evident.

The positive attitude appears also in the fact that 60% of the respondents believe that they could attend a program based mainly on suitably shaped printed material and not at frontal teaching, 30% declared that maybe they could, while only 10% answered negatively. In the question if they believe that printed material with some audiovisual material could substitute entirely the instructor, only 10% answered positively, 50% answered maybe and 40% has a negative opinion. This result keeps pace with the widely accepted opinion that all programs of remote study should take into serious consideration of the necessity of "man-to-man communication" as essential supplement of remain communication forms used. It should also be pointed that 90% of the ADETC trainees believe that the "man-to-man communication" is very useful, a percentage much bigger than the equivalents of the remain forms of communication.

This tendency also shows the confidence of the trainees in the traditional model of education, particularly if we take into consideration that only 2% of the trainee respondents have previous experience in remote education. It is worthy of note that the fact that this tendency is usual and presented in an important degree even when respondents have a certain experience in remote education [6].

Expected can be considered the answers in the question if the trainees could organise by themselves the study based on some indicative timetable, 30% answered positively, 10% negatively and the majority (60%) that maybe they could. Here becomes obvious the main reserves of the trainees for whether they can correspond in an educational methodology which they're not familiar with its operation and requirements. The interest of the trainees and their will to correspond in such a program appear from that 60% believe that they could find the essential time to study despite their daily

obligations, 25% declared maybe while only 15% gives a negative answer.

In the question if it would be possible to learn the use of a computer via a program of remote education, with the help of form and audiovisual material, 80% declare yes, 18% maybe while 2% no. In this point it is considered advisable to point out that the specific trainees do this precisely via ADETC, that is to say learn to use a computer, via the new technologies, in deed they have already completed with success the units that concern in the basic significances, in the management text and internet.

Finally, with regard to the forms of communication with the instructor which the respondents consider more useful and essential, apart from the "man-to-man communication", which has already been pointed, a high rate of preference (85%) assembled the electronic mail. The electronic mail is fast, even if asynchronous, cheap and with easy access communication form. The main reason of preference is generally speed and the combination of directness and written content.

## 5. Conclusions

Both from the theoretical frame as from the field study analysis can be realised that new technologies have the possibility of transforming so much the economic, social and political environment as the educational. Undoubtedly the new technologies become more and more essential in our daily activities and have considerably helped in the resolution of an adequate number of social and economic problems, but simultaneously involve also new challenges and social inequalities. Those who continue to mock the acquisition of knowledge and dexterities of new technologies render themselves "uninvolved spectators" of a society and economy that is immediately dependent from technology. Similarly those who do not have access in technology are found in unfavourable place and this constitutes a major question for all countries that wish to see all their citizens participating equivalently and watching the rapid developments in the all sectors of human activity.

New technologies, if they are used correctly, can constitute a powerful arm in the frames of lifelong education and in the effort of obliteration of inequalities in a society. However, it is a debt of science to guarantee that conditions, educational and functional, for the most optimal use of new technologies in lifelong education, so much in theorist as in practical level.

Nevertheless, more generally, the technology becomes beneficial and can yield positive results when knowledge primarily subsist, but also the explicit objective of utilisation in order to cover actual needs in the level of learning, employment, growth and social cohesion.

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