Some Educational Innovations for Overcome the Deficit of Information Literacy in a Time of Crisis

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Abstract

From a pragmatic point of view as well as from a theoretical perspective, the development of social networks has shown the role and importance of information and communication technologies in stimulating a huge amount of various processes in society. The impact of information environment today is indisputable, and society has the opportunity to both freely express themselves and to make use of the available technologies, necessary for communication in the digital world at any time and in any part of the world. The age limit of digital technologies users drops off significantly on a daily basis and this makes it necessary to provide information literacy among the population, which will lay the foundations for building critical, independent thinking and will form knowledge and individual skills for intelligence surviving in the information area. The main aim of the scientific research is to show that the dynamics of social processes, especially in a time of crisis, focuses the attention of mankind on one of the most important pillars in its development, namely education, in the hope that education, with its purpose and experience of applying different approaches and methods in practice will have a positive effect on improving the quality of life of the community. And yet, in times of crisis - political, economic, energy, environmental or health, the objectives of our research are focused on education, which still remains one of the most vulnerable public sectors. In conclusion, on the basis of the results received from the scientific investigations and taking into account crises as a factor with negative as well as likely positive consequences, the present research examines various educational approaches of an innovative nature that contribute to conducting research and to the application of new educational technologies during and after periods of crises.

Keywords: *innovations, overcome, education, information literacy, crisis, conceptual model*

1. Introduction

At the start of the 21st century, information and communication technologies triggered global integration of the information space and led to a drastic change in social attitudes. Information resources became increasingly accessible changing the way people communicate. The Internet has massively entered each social system turning into a value that people of all ages rely on more and more for the realization of their activities and interests. From an auxiliary resource in the 20th century serving primarily public production, information has become a major resource for all spheres of life in the 21st century.

The creation and mass use of state-of-the-art technology have marked the beginning of new social relations and a new way of life. Modern society is in a new stage of its development – the information society. The basic principle of the information society is that access to information is an undeniable human right, and information and communication technologies have created the conditions for the taking advantage of this right [1].

The creation and development of information and communication technologies have opened up new opportunities for free access to information and its exchange between users [2]. The incredible growth of information resources has immersed people in a kind of information stream. They turn out to be increasingly dependent on new technologies and even more vulnerable in the information environment [3]. Human abilities for the effective handling of information have been questioned – where to look for it and how to use it in their daily lives by retrieving useful knowledge from it.

1.1 Information literacy

The term information literacy was introduced into the scientific space in 1974 by Paul Zurkowski in his paper "Relationships and Priorities in the Field of Information Services", which to date is among the most cited titles on the subject [4]. It was in the 21st century, in

response to the need to define the number of skills comprising the effective search, finding, interpreting, evaluation and application of information that the term has been commonly used in society.

High information literacy of society is a basic prerequisite for achieving sustainable development on a global scale [5]. It "Provides the key to effective access, use and creation of content in support of economic development, education, health and services for people, as well as all other aspects of modern societies".

It is assumed that the information literate person is "the one who knows how to work most effectively with new technologies and information. He/she must be able to recognize when there is an information need, be able to locate, assess and use the necessary information effectively". [6], [7].

Several key components can be pointed out as key ones for the information literate person. They are as follows:

- to have the ability to use information resources effectively;
- to have the ability to perform a critical assessment of the source-content-reliability of the information;
- to apply this information ethically.

One of the main pillars of human development is education, and human capital takes an increasing place in it. The role of education in any social system is indisputable [8]. It exists and functions in the public environment for development and for this reason is part of the problems of society.[8]

Globally, education has been subject to changes different in form and size. They necessitate the reviewing and restructuring of institutions in the educational and scientific space.

Modern society today faces a dynamically changing social environment. In early 2020, the whole world faced a new challenge - overcoming the crisis Covid 19. In just a few days, the world declared a state of emergency. It was closed, literally. There was chaos, misunderstanding and fear. A time when we had to learn to live in a new and unknown way, to adapt to the situation, while ensuring the protection of our health and safety.

The crisis did not pass the education sector either. Not only were the borders of a number of countries closed, but also the institutions in them, including schools and universities. The crisis drew attention to the University as a key partner for maintaining a base of fundamental knowledge that will allow the efficient use and development of scientific capacity in achieving progress and maintaining sustainable growth in modern society [9].

Against the backdrop of an avalanche of fake news, often outpacing even the speed of the virus itself, limiting this alarming trend requires people to be information literate. And since fake news can inherently consist of partially or completely false information, be based on true information, deliberately taken out of the context of events, and certainly have a highly explosive character, modern humans today are expected not only to be prepared to orientate in the digital environment, but also to treat critically the received information [10], as well as to be able to use it appropriately and rationally in order to be of maximum benefit to both themselves and society.

2. The results

In order to achieve the main goal of the current research, namely to show that the dynamics of social processes, especially during a crisis, focuses the attention of humankind on one of the most important pillars in its development – education, good practices and experience in applying different approaches and methods in the field of education have been studied and systematized.

When choosing the methodology of the current research, which includes observations, analysis and study of previous experience, the nature of the purpose of the research was taken into account, as well as the principles of high ethics and precision.

Based on the conducted analysis of the educational activities, the research is oriented towards increasing the scientific and practical potential of the process of teaching and learning. In response to the need for innovation in the education sector during the crisis, the present research focuses on the following (results) recommendations:

- developing curricula to expand digital learning;
- encouraging students to acquire the skills needed in a globalizing world;
- the development of tools to deal with misinformation in rapidly evolving information technologies;

- creating tools for learning in an electronic environment [11];
- preparation of mechanisms for mutual assistance between trainees and trainers;
- providing a single space for universities, students and research;
- stimulating the development of centers of excellence in science;
- creating flexibility and stimulating lifelong learning to enable people, at any time of their age and social development, to return to the education system [12].

3. Conclusion

Recognizing education as a strategic tool for ensuring the advancement and progress of society in the social hierarchy, the sectors based on knowledge and intellectual work are becoming increasingly sought after and valued indicators that guarantee the prosperity of any social system.

And although the quality of education is the main responsibility of individual countries, the responsibility of universities to society remains indisputable. The main mission of information literacy is to develop and upgrade critical thinking in people, their ability to consistently and rationally use the information obtained, the acquisition of new knowledge and the preservation of proven effective knowledge, which gives us a good reason to conclude that the information literacy integrated in the educational programs becomes an essential factor favoring the development of any system [13].

In order to overcome the consequences of any crisis – political, economic, energy, ecological or health-related, education institutions should be able to respond to the social need for providing specialized professionals with broad competences. These people should be prepared to work in conditions of contemporary challenges guaranteeing the conduct of a high quality educational process for the acquisition of the knowledge and skills that are at the heart of social development [14].

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