

## BOOK REVIEW

### EDUCAȚIA DIGITALĂ [DIGITAL EDUCATION]

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The volume *Educația digitală [Digital Education]* (2020), published by *Polirom Publishing House* (Iași), is the result of a new and necessary collective effort in the times when the Romanian school is going through the global pandemic context and is trying to identify the most efficient solutions to continue the teaching process and to realize it at higher qualitative standards.

The coordinators of this work are well-known personalities in the domain of Educational Sciences, with vast experience, with vision and innovative spirit, authors of books, studies and research works, prize-winning, being appreciated by the academic community, actors with an important role in the process of elaboration of educational policies on a national level and vectors of the promotion and realization of quality in education: Univ. Prof. Ph.D. Ciprian Ceobanu - from the Teacher Training Department, Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences, "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iași; Univ. Prof. Ph.D. Constantin Cucoș - from the Teacher Training Department, Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences, "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iași; Assoc. Prof. Ph.D. Olimpiu Istrate - Teacher Training Department, Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences, University of Bucharest; Univ. Prof. Ph.D. Ion-Ovidiu Pânișoară - Teacher Training Department, Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences, University of Bucharest.

As the coordinators confess - even from the *Introduction* section -, the volume *Digital Education* represents "the realization of an older project concerning the impact and functionality of the new technologies on the training paths but, at the same time, also an answer to an urgent pressure to find solutions to the crisis of the recent months" (referring to the impasse moment generated by the pandemic in education). In this context, the works integrated into the present volume become true indicative and formative milestones for the teaching staff, contributing - at the same time - to understanding the changes, challenges, limits but also opportunities that occurred with the integration of the new Information and Communication Technology in education and can facilitate the transition to the digitalization and modernization of the education system.

Realized in a scientific, rigorous, realistic manner and approach each problem in a complex manner, the studies and research work integrated into this volume offer departure points both to the subsequent research, opening directions of educational thinking and action, and to the applied, concrete practice from the school area. The interrogations and reflections that the authors start from are objective and pertinent, without offering, however, a negative perspective on the subject approached, although the new environment that education has moved into for a while - the online environment - requires adjustments and a gradual rethinking of the entire educational process, from the skills a teacher should possess, to the curriculum, to the strategies used, to the resources and time management and to the way the student can be motivated and involved the best way possible in his/her training and development process:

- „How and how much traditional learning is found in long-distance learning?”
- „How looks the *new normal* in education (considering that some types of activities can be *moved* permanently online while others cannot)?”
- „How do we eliminate or attenuate inequalities - concerning technological access or use - among the different categories of students: prodigy, with special needs, underprivileged, etc.?”

Digital skills become essential, and “*the curriculum must go through redefinitions and redimensioning of technical and pedagogical order, taking into account both features, intrinsic to the new learning framework (relocation of training, asynchronicity, increased autonomy of the trainee), and a series of parameters characterizing the larger, sociocultural context, in which education is realized*”, affirms Prof. Constantin Cucoş (p. 260).

In the first part of the volume, *Sociocultural perspectives of the use of technology in education* are described. Thus, Univ. Prof. Ph.D. Ciprian Ceobanu opens the series of articles with the paper *Educational reconfiguring in the era of digital technology*; Univ. Lect. Ph.D. Simona Adam approaches the topic of *Generations in the change in the education system. The immigrants' and digital natives' digital skills*; Assoc. Prof. Ph.D. Silvia Făt realizes a synthesis centered on the educational effects of the *social networks* on students and teachers; Assoc. Prof. Ph.D. Roxana Ghiaţău presents the aspects of *Ethics and technology in the educational context*. Other topics found in this part are *Risks and security in the use of information technologies in educational contexts* (Univ. Lect. Ph.D. Andrei-Lucian Marian), *Personal data protection and security in digital education* (Ph.D. candidates Adriana-Maria Şandru and Daniel-Mihail Şandru, law expert and trainer).

The second part of the volume - *Forms and hypostases of the technology-assisted learning* - brings into the reader's attention *The education process in the perspective of digitalization*, a topic that Univ. Prof. Ph.D. Ion-Ovidiu Pânişoară debates from multiple perspectives, and where we find valuable ideas about the school of tomorrow, which needs to keep up with the changes in the social life, about today student's profile, curious, open to change, about *digital citizenship*, cyberbullying, about the realities in today school and the students' and the teachers' lack of motivation, about the high-quality teaching paths and practices, and about the way the digital resources support this process, concluding that “*school must permanently remain a place of experimentation, regulation and reconsideration of the technology and pedagogy behind the teaching approach*”, to offer stability and balance.

About the *Improvement of the education process and school performance by using the digital tools and resources*, Assoc. Prof. Ph.D. Olimpius Istrate realizes an analysis based on

specialized studies, illustrating the importance of e-learning in the increase of the graduates' chances of joining the labor market, and a series of results of ICT introduction in the teaching process. Other topics approached in this part: *Explanatory models of learning using ICT* (Univ. Lect. Ph.D. Ruxandra Chirca); *Modification of the individual learning profile in the digital technologies era* (Univ. Lect. Ph.D. Cornelia Măirean); *Self-regulated learning in the virtual environment* (Univ. Lect. Ph.D. Versavia Curelaru); *Investigation-based learning, by using a computer* (Univ. Lect. Ph.D. Roxana Apostolache); *M-learning and u-learning* (Univ. Lect. Ph.D. Dana Crăciun).

In the third part of the volume - *Technology in the delineation of pedagogical innovation* -, Assoc. Prof. Ph.D. Cătălin Glava debates a topic related to *Online learning platforms*, Ph.D. Simona Velea - excellence scientific researcher at the Education Sciences Institute approaches the topic of *European school partnerships by eTwinning*: what is the eTwinning community, about the students' motivation for education and the improvement of school results, about learning in groups or transnational classes using digital technology, etc.; Univ. Prof. Ph.D. Carmen Holotescu and Assoc. Prof. Ph.D. Gabriela Grosseck speaks about *Open education. Open educational resources and mass open online courses*, and Univ. Prof. Ph.D. Emil Stan proposes a topic about *Game and gratuitousness*.

Part 4 - called *Specificity of the teaching process in the technological era* - reunites under this title topic: *Digital education: for a functional and innovative didactics* (Univ. Prof. Ph.D. Ioan Neacșu); *Pedagogical mediation in the digital era* (Univ. Prof. Ph.D. Dorina Sălăvăstru); *Generating e-learning school contents/learning supports* (Univ. Prof. Ph.D. Constantin Cucuș); *Digital textbooks and students' skill formation* (Ph.D. Iuliana Lazăr and Assoc. Prof. Ph.D. Georgeta Pânișoară); *Evaluating school and academic performances in digital educational environments* (Univ. Prof. Ph.D. Nicoleta Laura Popa) and *Training teachers for nowadays' education* (Assoc. Prof. Ph.D. Marian D. Ilie).

"*Educational informatization* - affirms Prof. Constantin Cucuș (p. 257) - *represents an axis of educational modernization and renewal*". In strong relation to this technological environment, the school must realize a series of actions: assume it, exploit it didactically, transforming it into a support and way of learning further, "charge" it with education-generating stimuli, teach the young how to "live" in this new environment, to "*become critical and autonomous with this huge flow in which everything is mixed: value and non-value, necessary and accessory, beneficial and maleficent, comfort and danger, etc.*". At the same time, school is called to "*humanize this environment, fill it with perennial and useful values not just for those present, but also for those coming after us*" (p. 258).

The last part of the volume approaches topics related to *Using technology for educational support services*. In this respect, Ph.D. candidate Mihai Iacob presents the theme *Digital technology in career counseling*, Univ. Prof. Ph.D. Alois Gherguț proposes the topic: *The new digital technologies - approaches in special education and school inclusion for children with special educational needs*. In this last part, we can find subjects such: *Advantages and limits in using modern technologies for teaching basic disciplines to pupils with intellectual deficiencies* (Univ. Prof. Ph.D. Florin Emil Verza and Assoc. Prof. Ph.D. Marilena Bratu); *Technology in psychomotricity* (Univ. Prof. Ph.D. Beatrice Aurelia Abalășei and Univ. Lect. Ph.D. Raluca Mihaela Onose) and *Digital skills development in the elderly* (Univ. Lect. Ph.D. Georgeta Diac).

The new technologies have changed the world, the way we communicate, interact, collaborate, work, get informed, and learn, and school needs to adapt itself, integrate and use the e-learning means as a fundamental tool, contributing to the formation of efficient work habits necessary to the students in the future. The work *Digital Education* presents, from multiple perspectives, advantages and limits, challenges and opportunities that emerged with the need to translocate education in the online environment, contributing to the development of a new paradigm that will generate important and irreversible changes in the educational process. The theories and concepts presented in those studies can constitute a departure point in teachers' educational practice. The scientific, clear, comprehensible language, the documentation sources, the valuable reflections and pedagogical ideas can constitute basic support in the activity of any teacher preoccupied with his/her training and realization of a high-quality educational process.

With expertise and open vision, the authors of the papers in this volume are road-openers and mind-openers and, at the same time, strong pillars of the edifice of the Romanian education, contributing to understanding the way school needs to adapt itself, to include the new and to find again the best way it can answer a digitalized world's future citizens' training needs.

In conclusion, what characterizes the volume *Digital Education* is, doubtlessly, its pedagogical value, as it manages to bring under the same roof great names of the Educational Sciences area, specialists reunited in an innovative and necessary approach, of maximum interest, in strong relation to the present needs of the Romanian school.