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INTRODUCTION / INTRODUCTION

The transition from the information-based to knowledge-based society has taken place in the 21st century, where the general social progress has become a priority. Such progress is achievable through quality education, through time valued occupationally or freely, against the background of improving the life quality of each individual. The diversity of information sources, the myriad of ways of knowing and appraisal, the existence of certain unclear information, of little intrinsic motivation and the inadequate capacity of organizations to meet the challenges represent shortcomings that have increasingly imposed the classic principle of lifelong learning.

Considered the process of acquiring knowledge, of the adaptive use of experience, learning is seen as an all-inclusive and complex concept. The implementation of lifelong learning at the individual and institutional level takes many forms, being carried out, through some programmes, in the traditional education system, as well as outside it. The process of personality formation throughout the whole life integrates, longitudinally, basic education, fully rounded by the continuing one.

Our contemporary society is characterized by dynamic changes and, in order to meet the demands, people must learn continuously, quickly, thoroughly and efficiently. We can speak about the shaping of a true culture of learning, the main arguments in the favour of lifelong learning being: the need for adaptation, overcoming the knowledge barriers, the desire for social integration, completing the level of the previous schooling of the adult, maintaining the level of culture, in relation with the social community to which the individual belongs, boosting the self-image, the performance level in the economic and social activity, bridging the gap between the acquired qualification and the necessary one.

The evaluation of the lifelong learning process involves at least three important dimensions: what are the competences developed, how to achieve certain goals and how to monitor the study programmes. Because the reality of knowledge is dynamic, the ability to find and use data is the state-of-the-art quality of the educated person. From a strategic point of view, the picture of the methods, means and modes of organization varies and, because the knowledge society requires a more obvious connectivity between individuals and communities, the New Information and Communication Technologies (NICT) are highly relevant. The high degree of accessibility, activism, interactivity, increasing the speed with which changes occur and are communicated, the use of critical thinking, the development of a higher degree of autonomy in acquiring knowledge propels them as useful means, mainly in learning through discovery, in their own construction of understanding, in task completion.

The identified issue revolves around several questions: What are the values promoted in the today's society? What are the roles and competences of teachers in the knowledge society, especially as their development represents an axis in the

drafting of the Romanian or European educational policies? What impactful changes have restructured the meanings of learning? How are the educational environments articulated to promote lifelong learning? What arguments and hindrances are involved? What competencies are pursued and how can transversal competences be developed at different ages? What are the examples of good practice that validated non-formal or informal learning? From a curriculum-based perspective, how can the educational activities be better correlated with the workplace and self-educational concerns?, etc.

The Annals of the University of Craiova, Psychology and Pedagogy Series (ISSN 1582-313X), edited by the Department of Teacher Training, through the Centre for Psychopedagogical Research (Romanian acronym CCP), brings to your attention the theme *Lifelong learning in the knowledge society* in relation to Issue no. 1 (41) of 2020.

Analyzes, answers or new perspectives in the form of some theoretical or applied studies, with innovative value, fall within **the theme** of the current issue:

1. The strategic framework for international cooperation and teacher training in the knowledge society
2. State-of-the-art explanations/interpretations regarding the learning process
3. The complexity of learning: forms, levels and types
4. New approaches to teaching/learning methodologies. The benefits of the NICT and the contribution of the digital area to the lifelong learning process
5. The integration of computer systems to the open training and distance learning in the digital age
6. The specificity of learning processes and difficulties encountered by young people, adults and the elderly
7. Key competences of lifelong learning. Transdisciplinary curriculum approaches
8. Responsibility and autonomy in lifelong learning.

The studies are organised in several sections of the journal: **Theoretical Approaches - Re-evaluations and Openings; Educational practice - new perspectives; Research Laboratory.**

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THEORETICAL APPROACHES. REVISITED AND NEW PERSPECTIVES / APPROCHES THÉORIQUES – RÉÉVALUATIONS ET OUVERTURES

LIFELONG EDUCATION - NECESSITY AND DESIDERATUM OF THE PERSONALITY

Valentina MÎSLIȚCHI¹

Abstract

The article presents the problem of the need to ensure education throughout the life of the personality. There are highlighted various definitions of lifelong education given by various researchers, there is specified the purpose, objectives, characteristics, contents of lifelong education, there are described the forms and factors of lifelong education and it is elucidated the methodology of lifelong education.

***Keywords:** Lifelong education; Purpose; Objectives; Characteristics; Factors; Forms; Contents; Methodology.*

1. Introduction

Starting from the obvious reality of the need for change, lifelong education contributes to the rapid adaptation of people to emerging realities. The requirement of self-education in a constantly changing world is imperative. It is important to know how to restructure your knowledge, to give up some of it, to operate with new axiological standards and to manage in the world of values, to establish new hierarchies. Educability is required to be rethought in accordance with these new requirements.

Lifelong education is based on, but also forms new behaviors, such as the sense of responsibility, the respect for the identity of another, the satisfactory perception of otherness, the ability to collaborate, the objective self-assessment of one's abilities, etc. Given the fact that the values stipulated by the society are constantly changing, it is necessary for each subject to form abilities and habits to select and embrace the authentic values autonomously. In this context, lifelong education contributes to the formation of an axiological competence, which means the formation of capacities to operatively evaluate the new cultural stimuli and to

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integrate or connect them in a value system whose landmarks are intuited autonomously, to invent new codes of reference or discover new connections in the value field.

Lifelong education fuels and enhances the readiness of the subject to know more and better, to trust in his/her own strength to learn and research, to embark on an ever new existential path, which has another beginning at the horizon.

2. Lifelong education: defining notes

P. Lengrad (1973, p. 49) sees lifelong education as an action capable of “favoring the creation of structures and models that help the human being, throughout his/her existence, to continuous progress, preparation and development; to prepare the individual so that he/she may become as much as possible his/her own subject and his/her own instrument of his/her development through the multiple forms of self-instruction”.

P. Lengrand (1973, as cited in Macavei, 2002, p. 398), education expert, member of the U.N.E.S.C.O secretariat in the years 1960-1970, he delimited lifelong education from the particular meanings of post-school education and adult education. Education in general, and especially in its permanent sense, does not belong in the conception of the French thinker, to the notional category defined by the word 'to have', but to that of the word 'to be': “Lifelong education is not a simple continuation of traditional education. It represents a series of new approaches of some essential elements for the existence of everybody, starting with the meaning of this existence. It allows to discover a multitude of fundamental situations, in which the individuals appear in a new hypostasis, and brings unique solutions to the crucial problems of the destiny of individuals and societies”.

R. Maheu (1968, as cited in Jinga & Istrate, 2008, p. 187) opines that lifelong education is “... a dimension of life. It is a certain attitude of insertion in the real and not simply a preparation for the active and responsible existence”.

B. Schwartz (1976, as cited in Jinga & Istrate, 2008, p. 188) defines lifelong education as an “integration of educational acts in a true continuum in time and space, through the game of a set of means (institutional, material, human) that make this integration possible”. In his opinion, education is not limited to a single educational subsystem, for example the school, but encompasses all social activities that are carriers of education. In perspective, “the idea of permanence of education will be so commonplace that we will only talk about education, the notion of permanence being included in the very idea of education”.

For B. Suchodolski (1972, as cited in Jinga & Istrate, 2008, p. 188), the extension of lifelong education will make it “... a means of developing the needs and interest for cultural values, for that it corresponds to the orientation of human preferences and inclinations and because it makes our life more colorful and valuable”.

In agreement with B. Suchodolski (1972), another renowned specialist in the field, M. Rahnema (1975, as cited in Jinga & Istrate, 2008, p. 188) considers that lifelong education “aims to address the whole of the evolving human being, in all

areas throughout life [...]; it transcends not only the artificial barriers between school and non-school education and the classical distinction between general public education and adult education, but it is also based essentially on the unity between the educational processes and life that form the human personality [...]; it refers at the same time to the fundamental education, to the personal training, to the right to free time in its active, cultural and artistic aspect, and to the permanent access to educational means able to develop the human creative, intellectual and physical potential”.

The Council for Cultural Cooperation of Europe's Council conceives lifelong education as 'an organizing principle of all education' and involves “a complete, coherent and integrated system, providing its own means to meet the educational and cultural aspirations of each individual in accordance with his/her faculties” (as cited in Jinga & Istrate, 2008, p. 188).

In the opinion of R. H. Dave (1991, as cited in Jinga & Istrate, 2008, p. 188), “lifelong education is a process of improving personal, social and professional development throughout the life of individuals, in order to improve the quality of individuals' life, as well as their community's”.

Romanian researchers have also tried to capture in their theoretical approaches, the complexity of the phenomenon, its defining elements, its praxiological implications.

Defining the term education in the Dictionary of Contemporary Pedagogy, prof. Ș. Bârsănescu (1969, as cited in Jinga & Istrate, 2008, p. 188) states that “current pedagogy broadens both the sphere of education and its content. Thus, education becomes a process of human development in general, permanent education”.

Prof. S. Stoian (1972, as cited in Jinga & Istrate, 2008, p. 189) refers in several works to the different meanings and consequences of the conception of lifelong education. In the work *Education and Technology* he shows that “lifelong education starts from the hypothesis - generally not admitted before - that man is educable all his life and that, moreover, he needs this”, so that in the work *Education and Society* to specify that “... one of the most important currents, which concerns theoretically, but especially practically, propagandistically, our epoch, is that of lifelong education”. Prof. S. Stoian emphasizes, in this context, that the phenomenon determined by the information explosion requires the permanent transformation of man, even for those who in childhood or youth enjoyed a solid education.

G. Văideanu (1975, as cited in Jinga & Istrate, 2008, p. 189) thinks that lifelong education “... means, in our epoch, not only an interdisciplinary research, but also a socio-cultural action, a large-scale fundamental-applied investigation, organized on a national [...] and at the same time international scale, as well as a vast educational program that tends to be institutionalized”.

L. Țopa (1973) emphasizes that lifelong education “must be understood as a system of classical and modern educational objectives, methods and techniques, validated and in full revolution, capable of developing educability itself, a mobile

and continuous educational openness according to working and living conditions of generations of people and of each individual”.

Advocating for a 'rethinking' of the entire activity of adult education, T. Popescu (1974) states that “in the field of lifelong education, adult education is a necessary component, through which the human being maintains and perfects his/her personality quality, of dominator and not of domination of change” (as cited in Jinga & Istrate, 2008, p. 189).

D. Salade in *Dictionary of Pedagogy* (1979) defined lifelong education as a principle, conception, mode of functioning of educational action, system of objectives and educational techniques designed to ensure the training of people so that they continuously maintain their capacity for self-instruction and self-education. Lifelong education includes all aspects of human formation; it includes all forms of training and education (organized and spontaneous education, school and extracurricular). Lifelong education must promote the acquisition by any person of science to become and integrate socially, to allow human adaptation to the pace of the development of the society in which he/she lives or will live (as cited in Macavei, 2002, p. 399).

S. Cristea (2016, p. 74) considers that lifelong education defines a general direction of education development, engaged, in an open context, at the scale of the entire education system, in the perspective of the curriculum paradigm, which imposes normatively, axiomatically the exploitation of all the contents and general forms of education, in every moment of human existence, throughout the period of human existence.

M. Bocoș (2016, p. 61) highlights that *lifelong education* is the integrative and organizing pedagogical principle of all education, a principle that postulates the need to extend the educational act throughout life, in the form of a continuum of educational influences designed and realized throughout human existence and at any time of human existence. This justifies the attribution of the status of life dimension and engine of the society of lifelong education and the attention it enjoys in the contemporary world.

The basic structure of lifelong education is two-dimensional:

a) vertical (temporal); b) horizontal (spatial).

The *vertical dimension of lifelong education* refers to the *pedagogical time open* to education *throughout the human existence*, as a result of the social need for quality education, achievable through the exploitation of the *psychological* resources of human personality, which allow the continuous formation and development throughout the human existence. At this level, lifelong education exploits the pedagogical resources *psychologically* available in each 'life cycle' - childhood, preadolescence, adolescence, youth, maturity, old age - in relation to the natural and social '*roles and statuses*' acquired and continuously improved, as noted by U. Șchiopu & E. Verza (as cited in Cristea, 2016, p. 82).

The *horizontal dimension of lifelong education* refers to the *pedagogical space open* in every moment of human existence for the formation-development of the human personality by capitalizing on all the contents and general forms of education

in *formal and non-formal context*, but also *informed*. At this level, within the *educational process*, *lifelong education* generates major changes in the design of school training through:

- a) focusing *formal learning* on *basic contents*;
- b) completing/deepening the *basic contents* through *non-formal learning* (individual study, specialized school societies, etc.);
- c) openness to the resources of *informal learning*, offered by the subject's life experience (positive, negative), capitalizable in a *formal and non-formal context* (Cristea, 2016, p. 82).

The fundamental pedagogical concept of lifelong education defines a *general direction of development of education* as *quality education* that *pedagogically engages* all the *psychological* and social resources of the personality of the *educated* in order to exploit them throughout his/her existence and in every moment of his/her existence, achieved through the *optimal integration of all the contents and general forms of education* within "all the structures and stages of education on the vertical (temporal) and horizontal (spatial) dimensions" (Dave, 1991, as cited in Cristea, 2016, p. 83).

The fundamental directions of action in favor of lifelong education aim at:

- a) ensuring *continuity* between all *levels* and school/university contents, achievable according to the proposed *general and specific objectives*, which must aim in particular 'to avoid the loss of acquired knowledge';
- b) consolidating the *necessary unity between basic contents - forms of training*, achievable according to the proposed objectives;
- c) the maximum exploitation of the pedagogical resources (informational, human, didactic-material, financial), available in a determined pedagogical context (stage and discipline of education, lesson, etc.), with open character.

The *temporal dimensions of lifelong education* are extended within the education system, in an open context, pedagogically exploited at the level of 'two major orientations':

- a) *the education of pre-preschoolers, preschoolers, schoolchildren and students*, which aims at the formation-development of the "capacity to learn how to learn", which can be used throughout the human existence;
- b) *adult education*, necessary at a general level (cultural, civic, community) and special (professional).

The *spatial dimensions of lifelong education* are delimited and pedagogically exploited at any moment of the existence of the educated, in an open context, within:

- a) the global and partial social system (economic, political, cultural, community, natural);
- b) each level and discipline of education;
- c) each concrete education/training activity (lesson, specialized school society; university course, university seminar, etc.) (Cristea, 2016, p. 83).

"Lifelong education must be conceived, in the general framework of educational action, as a process starting at the dawn of life, encompassing what are commonly called school years, and continuing throughout life" (Faure, 1974, as

cited in Albulescu, 2019, pp. 57-58). Lifelong education integrates all types of learning experiences (formal, non-formal and informal) that an individual lives in his entire existence. A reality that the pedagogical literature does not hesitate to highlight: “The system of lifelong education requires a reasonably motivated integration of educational activities throughout the life. An integration of educational processes that take place in family life, in elementary and secondary school with vocational and adult education will help to oppose the exaggerated emphasis on the education of children and adolescents” (Dave, 1991, as cited in Albulescu, 2019, pp. 57-58). Education is not a passing moment in an individual's life. Typically, traditional pedagogy has considered it a process of training the young generation in an organized and systematic way, within the school system. In the vision of contemporary pedagogy, this process does not take place only in the years of childhood and youth, in school; it begins long before the individual steps on the threshold of the school and continues after graduation. Education is, therefore, an extension in time and space of formative actions and influences, beyond the institutional education system and beyond the age of schooling. It is a constant of the whole life, its effects being felt at the level of each stage of evolution of the individual's personality, as a continuous school, extracurricular and post-school formation.

C. Cucuș (2014, p. 200) considers: “The concept of *lifelong education* must be dissociated from another notion, *ie the permanent nature of education*”. The need for the permanence of individual and social education was seen long ago, first of all by the classics of universal pedagogy. “For every man his life - notes J. A. Comenius - is a school, from the cradle to the grave ”[...], “everything we are, what we do, what we think, talk, weave, acquire and possess it is nothing but a certain ladder on which we climb more and more to reach as high as possible, but without ever being able to reach the highest level”. It should be noted that the expression "lifelong education" is a concept specific to contemporary pedagogy, which covers a theoretical and action principle that seeks to regulate a certain reality specific to our century. Moreover, lifelong education theorists always reveal the factors that demand and justify the inclusion of education in this perspective: the process of accelerating change, the population explosion, the unprecedented evolution of science and technology, increasing leisure, the crisis of relational and life models (P. Lengrand, 1973), the multiplication of professions, the increase of the degree of democratization of the social life (Văideanu, 1988). Today, education must be conceived as an existential continuum, the duration of which is confused with the very duration of life and which must not be limited in time (school age) and closed in space (school buildings) (Faure, 1974). Lifelong education is a specific response to the existential dynamism, in the sense of involvement in self-training according to multiple and unique demands, “it is a way for man to free himself from tensions, crises, unpleasant professional surprises. It is a shield and a support that strengthens confidence in the future and in progress; it has an anticipatory character, based on the habit of learning and on the idea that in a *democratic society everyone learns from everyone*” (Văideanu, 1988, as cited in Cucuș, 2014, p. 200).

I. Albulescu (2019, pp. 59-60) observes that the contemporary discourse on lifelong education is based on the following ideas:

1. Man does not possess definitive knowledge, sufficient for all life. He lives in a world of possible truths, which can be confirmed by the constant interrogation of meanings.

2. Contemporary society needs individuals who are able to adapt to the demands of a constantly changing life.

3. Learning means permanent personal reflection on one's own learning objectives, strategies and outcomes.

4. Learning occurs not only in traditional education systems, but also in other contexts, especially in specific communities (real or virtual).

3. Characteristics of lifelong education

Prof. N. Silistraru (2002, p. 209) observes that the pertinent analysis of the exigencies and problems of the contemporary world allowed R. H. Dave to identify twenty conceptual features of lifelong education:

- the three fundamental terms on which the meaning of the concept is based are: 'life', 'permanence', 'education';
- education does not end at the end of school instruction, but it is a permanent process, which covers the entire existence of a person;
- lifelong education is not limited to adult education, but it includes and unifies all the stages of education: pre-primary, primary, secondary, etc. It makes an effort to consider education as a whole;
- lifelong education includes at the same time the formal and non-formal modalities of education; it encompasses both planned and accidental learning;
- the home plays the first role, the most subtle and crucial in initiating the process of lifelong education, which continues throughout life through family learning;
- the community also plays an important role in the system of lifelong education, from the moment the child begins to come into contact with it, and continues, during his life, his educational function in the professional and general fields;
- pedagogical institutions such as: schools, universities, training centers are obviously important, but some of the permanent organizations can no longer exist in isolation from the other educational institutions of the society;
- lifelong education aims at continuity and articulation according to its vertical and longitudinal dimensions;
- lifelong education also aims at integration in both horizontal and in-depth dimensions at every stage of life;
- contrary to the elite character of education, lifelong education has a universal and democratic character. It represents the democratization of education;
- lifelong education is characterized by: flexibility of content, tools, techniques and learning time;

- the permanent function aims at the dynamic approach of education, allowing the adaptation of auxiliaries and pedagogical means little by little, when the new achievements occur;
- lifelong education admits alternative ways and means of acquiring education;
- lifelong education has two component sides: general and professional. These components are not completely different from each other, they are related to each other and interactive;
- the functions of adaptation and innovation of the individual and of the society are realized through lifelong education;
- lifelong education exercises a corrective function, it remedies the difficulties of the current education;
- the purpose of lifelong education is to maintain and improve the quality of life;
- there are three conditions to achieve lifelong education: opportunity, motivation, educability;
- lifelong education is an organizational principle for all education;
- at the organizational level, lifelong education provides a total system of all education.

I. Jinga & E. Istrate (2008, p. 168) state that all these opinions outline some 'force-ideas' that deserve to be retained:

- the instruction and education can no longer be limited to the years of schooling, but must extend throughout life, at all people and in all spheres of social-human life;
- education must be conceived as a total formation of man, modeling multiple and deep the complex personality of each individual;
- education is constituted as a system of means, methods and techniques, meant to help the person and the community to achieve a normal process of social, professional and cultural adaptation;
- the stimulation of human creativity, productivity, thinking and action becomes the number one objective of psycho-pedagogical interventions.

4. The purpose and objectives of lifelong education

The *purpose* of lifelong education is to ensure the quality of individual and community life.

According to S. Cristea (2016, p. 84), the objectives of lifelong education are designed at the level of:

a) *general objective* - the transformation of the society, as a whole, into an 'educational city', responsible for the positive formation-development of the personality of the educated through the contribution of all subsystems of the global social system (economic - political - cultural - community - natural) and of all forms of human community (family; local, territorial, national and international community);