

Adapting to the Transformation of Education: New Challenges for Teachers

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Abstract

It is increasingly evident to the educational community today that technology is rapidly transforming Education and learning. Ubiquitously present, the digital criterion is inevitably and surely making learning and teaching move to a next step never experienced before. Moreover, the COVID19 disruption has contributed to the acceleration of this transformation that moved the educational and learning community into new virtual environments. And while good practice is necessary for an appropriate transition to the digital transformation era, it will require time, motivation, technology tools and infrastructures. It will also need knowledge, skills, appropriate pedagogical choices, support and a real mind-set and culture. Education needs to adapt, but adaptation can only be possible if it relies on both teachers' efforts towards learning sustainability and an adequate use of technology. Many questions come, therefore, to impose themselves in this new context as to: What challenges are facing teachers today? What competencies need to be developed by teachers and learners to be able to function appropriately and efficiently in order to thrive successfully in this era of digital learning? How can teachers manage their contents and pedagogy to respond to their learners' needs as far as skills and knowledge development, matched to a responsible and informed use of virtual spaces for learning?

Key Words: Challenges for teachers - Digital learning -Education Transformation - Global challenges

Introduction

Today, the world is witnessing a widespread digitalisation affecting a multitude of sectors. Along with business, education is the other important field that is impacted by this technological revolution. In this context, there is a great consensus: the digital revolution is producing a great impact on Education, which has to transform in order to adapt to the new requirements of a complex and intermingled world. Every day, new challenges come to defy us with an inevitable transformation that is a challenge to our former educational practices and visions. Information and knowledge are growing exponentially and we must recognize that, today, our educational system is no longer appropriately responding to the needs of our learners. It becomes clear, in fact, that Education can no longer use the same methods, curriculums, and objectives in a world context where technology is unabatedly invading every sector of human activity and life. In the current context of Artificial Intelligence and global challenges, in a fastly changing world, how can we adapt? The present paper will focus on some of the new educational challenges facing the educational community because of the fact of the inevitable transformation of education. It is an attempt to shed light on some of the necessary skills and competencies teachers need to develop, and those we need to make learners acquire in an increasingly interdependent and interconnected world.

1. Digital Technology Inclusion in Education

Digital technology can help transform Education for the better by completing and enriching content, improving the quality of learning, rethinking assessment, and enhancing teachers' contribution with their experience. In this context, two main aspects that have become concepts-are currently influencing students' learning today; what is called mobile learning, referred to as M-learning, which has been recognized by experts as a transformative force, allowing for Ubiquitous learning or what is referred to as U-learning (UNESCO Mobile Learning Week,2018).

We have to recognize the fact that very often, learners are currently digitally literate more than their teachers might be, and that therefore, they experience a constant and inevitable influence of different forms of online content. Social networks, e-learning platforms along with the multitude and diversity of the teaching and learning resources available online, constantly challenge teacher's traditional way of providing knowledge. New technologies appear every day, and are shaping the world differently from what it used to be. There are changes happening globally and Education needs to adapt. In the era of the fourth industrial revolution (first coined by Klaus Schwab in 2016), Artificial

Intelligence is producing a drastic change in all fields and therefore, we can no longer keep the same vision and methods in Teaching and Education.

As such, there is a need to digitalize the pedagogical environment by selecting and using the appropriate technological tools to enhance the teaching and learning outcomes (Jordano de la Torre (2019). Digitalising an educational context could help to respond to learners' needs and create a positive environment, where the teacher and the educational institution, can be trusted to be adequately guiding and preparing young learners so that they efficiently and objectively manage their use of knowledge and information obtained digitally.

Online environments can also be very useful thanks to the availability of students' portable technologies, like smartphones, tablets and laptops as well as in-class projectors and smart boards. Teachers can assess and monitor the evolution of students' level thanks to recorded data of their continuous work and grades. In addition to the endless technological possibilities, a more personalised learning is possible for students, allowing them to learn at their own pace and style. Moreover, collaboration between students is facilitated thanks to the different learning platforms, and better communication channels that lead to richer exchanges are established between them (Anderson, 2010).

Nevertheless, it is important to point at the fact that the COVID 19 pandemics has come to accelerate the process of technology adoption in educational institutions, especially higher education ones, with most of the teaching community not yet ready. This has, clearly unveiled the limitations of education systems worldwide that have proved being unprepared to use technology. Both students and teachers found themselves obliged to move from a traditional face-to-face classroom setting to a virtual remote learning. Digital Technologies and resources for learning were useful but not available to everyone, nor are mastered by all.

In addition, the digital divide was clear for developed countries compared to developing or underdeveloped ones. Connectivity issues were discouraging in most of cases in addition to low-tech and no-tech contexts where remote learning was not possible (Kripps, 2013). A majority of teachers proved to have a poor or no digital technology and pedagogy skills. Students' poor attendance online and lack of motivation increased teachers' lack of enthusiasm to adopt remote teaching with technology. Nevertheless and in spite of all these facts, in an ocean of learning resources availability and opportunities, it becomes urgent to adapt our educational system to the inclusion of digital technology.

2. Adaptation: a Necessity

To be able to face complexity and cope with the transformation, adhering to this change with resilience and adaptation is necessary. Education is faced with the new imperative of embracing the digital and intelligent era because technology is taking learning to a next move and the educational community needs to be part of it, generating learning but also sustaining it. In fact, with digital content availability, we are moving from structured formal teacher-centered, classroom learning to unstructured, ubiquitous freely available online, informal learning.

However, it must be, in no way, a matter of developing survival strategies, but, rather, a matter of developing the essential skills for adaptability. We need to help learners acquire skills and knowledge as fast as the world is changing, empowering them and helping them be open to the world. At the same time, teachers need to be aware about what it takes to be an educator in a digital technology revolution. As digitalization raises the need for training for teachers in the basics of ICT use, they need to develop ICT competency and literacy (UNESCO, 2018) as well as resources for the transformation of their teaching practices to fit the new roles they have to fulfill.

3. Teachers' New Roles

In this context, teachers have new competencies and skills to develop in order to perform their new roles (Bacla, 2022). First, they have to consolidate their role of facilitators to better foster autonomy among learners, as well as be mentors and inspire their learners instead of keeping their authoritarian way of *unique* knowledge providers. They have to improve, through an efficient and constant training, their digital literacy to cope with the requirements of such a technological transition in education. Create an environment in which the use of some educational platforms, like Moodle, can contribute to a better assessment of learners' performance. Encourage a form of "Blended Learning" which accommodates a more or less traditional learning style to a modern one based on technology. Make use of the concept of "Flipped Classroom" which relies on a students' anticipation and discovery of a coming lecture's content, and subsequently learn them with the teacher in a physical setting. Regularly meet students online and communicate with them to enhance mutual communication and interaction. Introduce some skills such as teamwork, problem solving, critical thinking, creativity and leadership.

Studies on the transformation of educational systems describe successful educational models such as Finland, Singapore, Canada that moved from an education that controls knowledge to an education that empowers learners, develops, encourages their innovative and creative mind, and hence, helps

create knowledge. As such, resorting to an instruction and pedagogy where learners, speak their minds, discover and reveal their talents will be generating and sustaining learning. Developing our learners' creative and critical thinking skills through a variety of practical activities that make them learn and enjoy doing practical tasks, must be part of every curriculum.

4. How to make a useful impact as a teacher in this new context?

In addition to the digital competencies development challenge, the sustainability of teachers is also viewed to be essential, in the sense that they need to remain diverse and productive indefinitely. Along with developing digital technology literacy, teachers will necessarily need new kinds of skills and competencies. Despite teachers' limited personal potential in using technology, a teacher can still be a mentor, a manager working towards learners' educational empowerment.

Because instructional design needs to fit students' new ways and objectives for learning, it is the task of teachers to help learners develop the ability to meet the skills requirements of the present and the future. Their mission is to help students learn independent thinking, teamwork, and empathy in addition to values. They have to foster appropriate attitudes and informed awareness, through adequate content and an efficient pedagogy. Teaching students to be creative and deal with the unexpected as well as fostering soft skills development, needs to be part of every curriculum that needs to focus on up-to-date objectives and priorities in selecting content. Similarly, relational competencies appear as necessary while learning to interact, to share and to live with others.

Finding out how we can make enabling environments with sustained skills development is necessary. Key skills will include problem solving, making associations and elaborations, establishing appropriate links, developing the capacity to relate to others, by developing speaking and communicating with others as well as with different cultural communities (Care Griffin, Wilson (2018).

According to Dudeney & al (2013), Digital literacies refer to our ability to make effective use of the technologies at our disposal. However, information literacy is a matter of being able to find information, evaluate it, use it and create a new one in an effective and objective way. Teachers need to empower learners by showing them how to strive to reach their educational, social and professional objectives with digital technology.

Therefore, it is essential to provide learners with information literacy in this era of digital technology, in the sense of showing them how to manage their online spaces in a safe manner, interpreting data, making cultural associations, reflecting on evidence, Identifying fake news, objectively creating content and sharing knowledge, and encouraging creativity and innovation. Students need to learn understanding, choosing, connecting, judging, reading and interpreting, in order to act independently, objectively, efficiently and appropriately to problem-solve issues around them.

More concretely, learners need to be supported by helping them develop appropriate and concrete skills and abilities to learn and work in an increasingly demanding and competitive job market. They need to learn to communicate appropriately and efficiently in a complex world, benefit objectively from their digital and mobile exposures, and develop useful, well-informed, and responsible digital skills.

They also need to learn how notions like empathy and emotional intelligence can effectively help manage interpersonal relationships, at work and in society, stressing the notion of learning to live together. It is an imperative today to look for different ways to integrate and adapt innovating pedagogies and technology-based modes of learning for the sake of our learners' empowerment.

Students have different expectations today as regards their institutional learning because of the digital availability of knowledge. Therefore, educational institutions need to respond appropriately to the newly arising needs by collecting evidence about students' experiences and practices of learning with digital tools in order to provide an appropriate instructional intervention.

5. Challenges facing teachers

It is increasingly evident that most of teachers fear that their indispensability would no longer be important in the pedagogical equation, due to a form of rivalry imposed by technology. Educators can feel frustrated due to their poor skills in digital literacy, which can significantly impede a favourable implementation of technology in education.

Moreover, among the challenges hindering a fast and efficient transition to digital technology in education are not only teachers' poor digital literacy -An ill- practice of technology by teachers is a reality- but also and especially, their poor status and lack of support and motivation. Indeed, teachers are often poorly trained, undervalued, and underpaid, and are held back by outdated roles, methods, and tools of instruction (United Nations, 2022). In fact, teachers

need to be supported at all stages of their adaptation during their training. Without this support, no transition to education transformation would be possible.

Teachers 'professional development- whether they are experienced or are new to the profession- will need to include training in digital teaching competencies. In fact, the use of technology by teachers needs to be streamlined from pre-service teacher training to in-service teacher training. Teachers need digital empowerment through developing autonomy and confidence in using digital tools like educational platforms. And so, access to training to develop specific skills and keep up-to-date is an imperative (Méndez et al, 2022).

While it is of paramount importance to adapt, it is important not to undervalue teachers' unique skills and experiences because of technology easy access. Indeed, Learners have social and human interaction needs that only teachers can fulfill. At the same time, when teachers make use of their experience, creativity, collaboration, introduce know-how skills in their instruction, and put forward the importance of values, they are likely to become agents of change and their contribution will remain essential. In fact, remote teaching experiences, all over the world, have proved to have limitations and are not the preferred way of teaching and learning for a great number of students and teachers alike.

It seems obvious, then, that the main challenge is how to be an effective bridge between students and the challenges facing them, forecasting their future labor market and skills needs at a local and international levels. As such, there is an urgent need to rethink and reorient the education system, to redefine, reshape, and reimagine our teaching practices. We need to develop new and realistic objectives for a future we need to prepare for urgently. The main objective being to maximize learning and teaching potential and therefore, assure quality education.

Conclusion

To sum up, and in order to deal efficiently at a local level, with this inescapable educational reality, it would be pertinent to create a well-designed strategy that can be based, first, on our educational vision. It needs to respond, not only to a national but also to global needs, and quality standards at national and international levels. By recognizing the fact that classical education systems are expiring, we can better adapt. A full awareness of this new phenomenon of educational transformation can help educators better cope with it. A realistic evaluation of the situation in Algerian educational institutions is necessary, taking into account the different aspects composing this so-called digital transformation. We must not forget that technology can only be a tool

accelerating the learning process and making it fit every individual learning style. It can, however, not be a substitution to the face-to-face classroom interaction. Adhering to this change and transformation of Education might be challenging, not to say destabilising and will certainly require time. However, because technology will always be the norm, as educators we must be aware of what it takes to be a teacher in a digital technology revolution, in order to be appropriately adapting and responding to what must be the methods, contents and skill set our learners will require in order to successfully thrive in this digital technology era.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest

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