In the shadow of Coronavirus:
Distance education and digital literacy skills in Greece

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Abstract
In the age of the Coronavirus pandemic we experience something unprecedented. This situation forces us to adapt to new circumstances in all sectors of our lives. Consequently, the field of education is changing even temporarily. We are now locked up in our homes and teach through the distance education platforms. Teachers have been thrown into the battle of "survival". Students take courses remotely, write assignments and operate in the digital world. But what implications does this situation have? What issues can we discuss and improve in the future? This theoretical paper presents my concerns about the paradoxical of Greek education, our adaptation to innovative learning methods and the future of education. Will we take advantage of these opportunities in the future?

Keywords: Coronavirus, school, digital skills, distance education

1. Forced learning conditions

A new situation appears in the foreground. Globally, societies are adapting to these new facts, because of 'Covid-19' (Coronavirus), with social, cultural, economic and educational implications. So we're locked up in our homes, working differently, teaching from a distance, taking advantage of the e-learning platforms, as "tech-experts" (Taylor, 2018), sometimes without technical problems and sometimes having to deal with several of them. School's out, but class 'on' (Zhou et al, 2020). Based on this situation, we involve or best "force" our students to connect online and participate in the educational process through virtual classes, which simulate all the characteristics of a modern educational environment (whether they have an internet connection or do not have this possibility from home). Furthermore, today teachers are being asked, more than any other time, to restructure their teaching practices and to go "hand in hand" with these changes, even if all this is too short. And most importantly, teachers are invited to do so without being prepared at all! At the same time, the Greek Education Minister notes: *"(...) the response of teachers and students to distance education exudes a particular dynamism. The encouraging early signs strengthen our belief that the education system needs to show greater confidence in our teachers, to expand the limits of their autonomy, but also to invest in processes and infrastructures that will actively support their teaching work".*

The Minister of Education gives the impetus for the technological equipment that needs to exist, for the educational staff and their training in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and for the cultivation of (a) synchronous survival skills (Eshet, 2007). It is therefore a period when much seems to be changing.

If we put the above in a social and educational context and consult the general part of the Curriculum of primary and secondary education in Greece (see curricula in: http://ebooks.edu.gr/new/ps.php) we will read this: *"The various social, political, economic and cultural conditions of our time have as their main characteristic the fluidity, which is exacerbated by the rapid scientific and technological development. In this context, the school's once undisputed role, as a key social institution, in the field of knowledge provision and skills development, seems to be subject to some weakening, because the conditions for the formation of cognitive data are multimodal and diverse. Moreover, today's reality forms a new framework of educational and social needs for each individual, particularly in terms of the search, acquisition, management and exploitation of new knowledge".*

In this "differentiated" reality we have been adapting every day, and we have, with great surprise changed the way of teaching, integrating digital media into it. The modern, digital school, which Greek education policy has been evangelizing for years, seems to be taking shape today, on the occasion of the Coronavirus pandemic. Yet to this day, the school was aiming (more theoretically) at preparing the new generation for the exploitation of ICT. It is noted in the official educational texts that: *"The introduction and use of ICT in educational practice should not be addressed in the light of a simple technological modernization as an end in itself. It should be done with pedagogical conditions, which will ensure the humanitarian education for the society we envision (...)".*

However, in practice, teaching was fragmentary, away from interdisciplinary and holistic approaches and far from the digital school logic. In essence, it is found that digital tools are part of the teaching, mainly in the computer science course, with a technology-oriented approach (with negative sign) (Koutsogiannis, 2007b). In this approach, the student is taught about the computer and not with the computer. The student learns to use digital tools and recognizes their features, but he/she cannot associate them with his/her daily practice (domestic literacy practices) (Koutsogiannis, 2011; Tzifopoulos, 2016a).

Also, if we look back at the recent past, we will see that the Greek school does not go forward, but goes back. In particular, on the basis of Act No. 14/21-04-2016 of the Institute of Educational Policy is expressly prohibited the use of mobile phones and digital devices by students within the school space. In particular: *"Students are not allowed to own other than mobile phones and any other electronic device or game, which has an image and sound processing system within the school environment. The appropriate equipment, available to them by the school in which they attend, is used during the educational process in general and only under the supervision of the teacher".*

Of course, mobile phones and digital devices can cause inconsistencies and problems in the educational process, however they cannot be excluded in the so-called digital school (Cavanaugh et al., 2012). Related research data give us encouraging details on the exploitation of mobile technology in education (m-learning) (Ditzler, Hong & Strudler, 2016). How can I teach in modern school and not be described as traditional or conventional, when my student spends several hours in front of a digital screen? How can I not sit on my student's interest when I teach only with the school textbook, when I do not interact with my class and ask for passivity, non-engagement and memorization? How can the student not refuse, many times, to attend a lesson when it has nothing to offer him/her, from what he/she learns outside the school?

In this respect, a characteristic narrative of a Foreign Language (FL) teacher (highly qualified) from an ICT training programme (for more information see: https://e-pimorfosi.cti.gr/to-ergo/epimorfotes-pake). The FL teacher states: *"Many times, unexpected things happen and we have to handle them in conditions of stress and anxiety... Maybe we can use the forbidden cell phone. Recognizing the supporting role of digital media in teaching, I have been preparing e-twinning programs in recent years and integrating them into my class. With the partner school from Marseille, before the holidays, we decided to have a video conference to exchange wishes. Together created the 'event' on the platform, and other technical details (...). We connected and the problems started: bad connection, picture frozen, there was no sound... In general, a catastrophe! And how do you keep 20 students? They were talking to me, and they were making a fuss. The internet connection was very poor to non-existent. And the clock was ticking. My French colleague calls me on my cell phone to get to know each other, I answer and I hear from the students: "Cell phone in class?". Yes, cell phone in class! Finally he suggested we connect to Viber and we managed to communicate and "save" the lesson! Then, I explained to my students that the cell phone has a pedagogical use too."*

In such a sense, the mobile phone is considered "forbidden" by students, such as the "fruit of sin", which should not taste Adam and Eva. But what will be the result? Students lose the "Heaven" (what the current official education system offers them), to run counter to the usual teaching practice and deviate from the permissible? The ban cannot give anything positive if it has not been carefully handled. For me -and I strongly support it- mobile phone and mobile technologies (e.g. Tablets) can be integrated as a new literacy practice in modern schools (if we want to have a modern rather than an anachronistic school system). The issue is how to integrate this innovation into education. It clearly draws on teacher education issues, different practices in schools and flexible curricula (Nikolopoulou, 2020).

Marc Prensky (2006) refers to the benefits that modern learners can gain from their involvement with digital tools, mobile devices and digital/online games. In his book: *"Don't Bother Me, Mom, I'm Learning! How computer and video games are preparing your kids for 21st century success and how you can help"* adheres to new learning skills or life skills (Morris, 2009), such as collaboration, engagement, communication, interaction, learning and problem-solving strategies and metacognitive skills. Maybe, these are the modern social skills that today's school needs to cultivate. We could also describe them as skills in "Covid-19" pandemic periods. This is because we ask students to forget or, better, to put in brackets what they have known so far and we have been giving them as appropriate school practices and to adapt to new situations of e-learning, distance education (Tzifopoulos, 2015) and autonomous learning, working constructively.

Consequently, the modern teacher must be actively and dynamically involved in this. But what kind of teacher? The teacher who is close to retirement and does not have the proper ICT training? The substitute teacher who still does not know very well his/her teaching subject and what "classroom dynamics" means, while at the same time having to adapt to a new situation? The technophobic teacher? The one who has characteristics from the syndrome of job burnout and is now called upon to devote even more time to teaching and engaging in something unprecedented? The teacher who is not satisfied with the external motives by the state? The teacher who cannot handle the digital class and the new generation students? The teacher who does not have such a culture of learning and often lack of computer literacy skills (Sheffield, 1998)? Fortunately, there is also the majority of teachers in Greece who adapt to the new conditions. However, adapting to change or something temporary requires solid epistemological beliefs from our teachers.

2. Well-prepared students

A report by 'PISA' finds that students in Greece on average spend just 59.2 minutes a day in school to engage in an online school activity, when in countries such as Denmark, Sweden, New Zealand and Australia the time spent on the internet is at least two to three times higher. If we compare this time with the time that students use internet at home, we will see the difference (out-of-school literacy practices) (Sefton-Green et al., 2016). Greek students seem to spend 154.3 minutes a day to take advantage of the internet at home. Minutes increase on average at weekends (200.6 minutes) (PISA 2018). These data give us at least a first answer for the time that Greek students spend on the computer for teaching purposes and for entertainment and communication purposes. Surely, these figures do not make us very happy, considering the connection that exists with the computer science course.

Students seem to be quite familiar with technology, but they are integrated into their own everyday practices, such as entertainment (YouTube), communication (social networking: Instagram, Facebook, Messenger), engaging in digital games (e.g. Roblox). In such a sense, parents consider this activity to be natural, but not so natural in the school environment (Koutsogiannis, 2007a; Marsh, 2010; Koutsogiannis, 2011). The normalization of technology and its use in the students' daily life often deprives the privileges that could gain if they used technology in the school class.

This new situation that "requires" us to be in front of a mobile phone or computer screen probably does not particularly trouble modern students, who are described as "digital natives" (Prensky, 2001). This is because our students were born in the age of modern digital technology, socialize daily with digital media and interact, utilizing them in a completely natural way. This is a "normalization" stage (Bax, 2003). In other words, young people in this era seem to be using digital media as an extension of their usual and everyday practices. Quite simply, it is perfectly natural for them to do so and they do not perceive it as something new, as something innovative or as something difficult and detached from their society. This "normalization" stage does not apply to everyone, but it draws a dividing/invisible line between the world of minors and the adult world. So two worlds, with their own habits and practices, sometimes digital and sometimes non-digital literacy (Tzifopoulos, 2018).

The policy makers, once the situation with the new virus is normalized, should take this perspective into account for the benefit of the educational process. They should put the issue of innovation on the table, taking advantage of modern technology, through research into how this is being exploited by the new generation. We need to learn from our students and adapt our educational and teaching practices accordingly. We must listen to the voices of our students for change and reform of the current curricula (gradually, wisely and scientifically, away from political considerations). We need to connect the school with society.

Today we have these conditions, which require adaptation to a digital way of thinking. Tomorrow, perhaps another issue will arise, which as a 'challenge' should be dealt with accordingly. That is why it is not enough to be only digitally literate or "digital natives", but also to operate with "wisdom". In this situation perfectly fits what is proposed in modern literature; to be "Homo Sapiens Digital" (Prensky, 2009). This term has a twofold interpretation: (a) on the one hand, it relates to the ability of individual to function wisely and effectively with digital media, and (b) on the other hand, through the use of technology to be able, constantly, to improve cognitive, social and emotional skills.

At this stage, this term directs us, initially, to the first level and to our effective involvement with the digital means. Teachers and students should "wisely" operate and adapt learning and teaching to the new data of the imposed digital age (Prensky, 2012). However, once we take the appropriate distance from this 'treaty', we will certainly have to move to the second stage and understand how to cultivate flexible learning skills, depending on the broader social conditions. It is clear that new situations, from now on, will require emerging forms of skills and literacy. Technology, therefore, must not only make us more intelligent, but also wiser in how to use it or how to cope with similar situations (Skiba, 2010).

Wisely the policy makers have done so with the right argument of the continuation of the school and academic year. They thus implemented a measure concerning the universal use of distance education. Gradually, teaching moves to a new form, "rebaptized" and gets the designation "digital education". Attempts are made to support such an operation through e-learning (like we have just suddenly woken up…), by providing (a) synchronous form of learning, with digital libraries and websites (e.g. Photodentro (http://photodentro.edu.gr/lor/), digital school (https://dschool.edu.gr/), digital platform "e-me" (https://auth.e-me.edu.gr/), platform "Aesop" (http://aesop.iep.edu.gr/), video lessons from ERT (https://webtv.ert.gr/category/mathainoume-sto-spiti/), involving students in this process and with enough preparation by teachers to "upload" material to the platforms and accept the assignments of their students (acting as digitally literate or with such a veneer).

If we were just beholders of all this effort, we might find such an undertaking easy. However, those who work in the educational field, understand that anything that is applied needs careful handling, method and pilot applications. In this case, what I mention is considered a luxury. We therefore learn and operate, many times, instinctively, drifting away from the passion of our job, from the need to teach our students and to engage in this "game" of e-learning.

In other circumstances where this pressure would not exist, consider how many hours of training are required, so that a teacher is considered certified in the ICT use, in its pedagogical perspective and in the principles of distance education. How many training programs could give us a proper result in education? In other circumstances, teachers would be trained by the creation of relevant

educational material by specialists, we would then proceed to pilot applications and experimental efforts in some public schools and in the long run all this effort we would try to generalize it, acting as multipliers. However, with students, who would be largely ready to accept this innovation and change, but with teachers who, in the complexity of their role, should fit in and something like that, others more positive and others more negative and perhaps suspicious.

However, in European countries such distance education models seem to be common place and exploited in the context of so-called blended learning models (Staker & Horn, 2012). In some cases, it is found that e-learning courses are added to the core of the curriculum as prerequisites for obtaining the certificate of education (Roblyer & Doering, 2013).

Also, such forms of learning are favored by the principles of the flipped classroom. In this case, students read and research, consult digital material through platforms outside the school context and come to the school to discuss the relevant theory and what they undertook at home, so that they can develop it and reflect further. This is achieved through strategies for problem-solving, collaboration and interaction among students and between students with their teachers (Engin, 2014). But why have we been ignoring these possibilities...? We thought these forms of education were utopian for Greece.

With reference to the above, another dimension comes to be added, which is not supported by some (Robinson, DiMaggio & Hargittai, 2003; Koutsogiannis, 2007b). But I think it is real and we need to discuss it. This situation seems to maintain and exacerbate so-called social inequalities. Students who may not have access to digital tools or have limited access to them from home. Students who may not have an internet connection or have to connect to the platform together with their siblings, who at the same time have a course... Such a reality raises the issue of digital inequalities and, of course, the digital divide (Warschauer, 2004). It is argued that such problems can be addressed and overcome. My answer is “yes”, but in the long run.

The digital divide for me exists, it is visible and we cannot “bury our heads in the sand” and hide behind theories of equal education, when some students are excluded from such a humane learning perspective. It is certain that even today there are households (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/), although few, that do not have a (functional) computer, that have a single device or none, that have no internet connection and people who abstain from such practices (Borghini & Campo, 2015; Gounopoulos et al., 2018). So, we have students either from different cultural backgrounds or -and- from low educational and economic levels, who lack in their digital skills and equipment in their homes. What's the fate of these students? How will they be trained? Won't they be left behind compared to the other students who follow the state line and attend online public and private courses? It is therefore a "treaty", which clearly raises the issue of the intergenerational digital divide (Bikos, Stamovlasis & Tzifopoulos, 2018), which concerns the different degree of familiarity and engagement with the digital tools of people of the same age group.

We accept that this measure is temporary, that the course taken is positive, despite the short period of implementation of the measure, but certainly not all the necessary measures have been taken. How can they be taken when there was no provision for this? That may sound judgmental, but it must also wake us up. Huge amounts of money cannot be spent on European funds for teacher ICT training (Kalogiannakis, 2010), the creation of computer laboratories in schools and universities,

the creation of new academic positions to support ICT for teaching and pedagogical purposes, and all this has not translated into specific strategic and methodical measures, which would provide an alternative view to ICT teaching.

The lesson to be learned from this difficult situation relates to the substance of the measures. Not everything must be sacrificed on the altar of political ideology and money, but must also have benefits in education. We could have ready learning platforms, which are used in a blended learning model by primary and secondary school students throughout the school year. There could be provision for ICT teacher training with a focus that they can operate digitally, teach remotely and also post digital educational material on these platforms. However, this measure should have universal and compulsory effect.

If our students had learned to operate in the "normalization" stage with digital media and integrated them into their school practice, the situation would have been different. Similarly, if teachers operated in such a way, gradually, through education, training, feedback meetings and constant technical and teaching support, as well as pedagogy, then their professional identity or identities would be formed accordingly. An extreme example could be this: Let us think that, under certain circumstances, a substitute teacher, who the state has placed him/her in an isolated Greek island, would be able to "serve" education with a model of distance education. In other words, to connect daily with his/her class and the few students and to do the course online (with the support of relevant material and with specific learning strategies, adapted to the needs of such an education), with what this entails. The debate here can take a long time, because issues of pedagogy, interaction and change in the usual structure of a school class are added. Others would see it as innovation and as a positive point of view and others as something dangerous, gnawed at the foundations of traditional form of education. In my view, the solution is somewhere in the middle, where conditions require us to adapt teaching to reap students and teachers teaching and pedagogical benefits.

3. Teacher in a new condition

Student: "Mrs. Mary, you sent us an announcement about a task you have uploaded to the platform, urging us to respond, but I can't find it."

Teacher: "Helen, thank you very much. Correctly... I thought I uploaded the paper, but I didn't. Can you check my “wall” and see if it's up right now?

The above crosstalk is true (the names are fake for ethical issues) and gives us many topics for reflection, which do not allow us to be complacent. A teacher who thought she had used the asynchronous education platform correctly, but somewhere was wrong. So she's asking for the student's help.

In the light of the foregoing, have we wondered about the competence of our teachers who teach in today's schools, whether they can meet this "challenge"? And here I quote data from my postdoctoral research to philologists in Thessaloniki, which feed us with elements on their professional identity and digital competences (Tzifopoulos, 2020a). Through this up-to-date research we find the inability of teachers to teach by utilizing digital tools in their classrooms, in a functional and pedagogical way. Although a 42.0% percentage of philologists claim to be familiar with technology (mechanistic optics), however when they have to link this knowledge to their

subject, pedagogical practices and teaching activities (functional perspective), there is a problem. And the problem is exacerbated by teachers who have many years of service in education (over 11 years) or who do not have sufficient knowledge in digital media or who do not have a master's or doctorate degree (correlation of variables: x^2 (5)=12,191, p.value: 0.032). This, of course, the inability to connect the three cycles (subject matter knowledge, knowledge of pedagogy, technology knowledge), based on the "Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge" model (TPACK) (Tzifopoulos, 2019b), may be linked to many different factors. Relevant interpretations are linked to their lack of initial education, their piecemeal training, which is not targeted and is not linked to modern social requirements, such as, of course, their attitude towards learning, teaching and technology. In other words, the factor of their personal epistemological beliefs is added.

Outlining, through this research, the profile of the modern teacher could conclude that the male teacher with additional degrees, with a high sense of self-confidence about subject, without fear of technology, by adopting the view that technology is necessary in modern didactics, but not a panacea, teaches more effectively, utilizes modern methods in his teaching, pedagogically implicates his students in the learning process. However, it appears that despite his satisfactory level of computer literacy, he does not use technology with pedagogical targeting than the teacher who has fewer years of service in education. There is a shortfall in the "Technological Pedagogical Knowledge"/TPK model (Tzifopoulos, 2020a).

The research concludes that the positive teachers' attitude towards technology is working (Tzifopoulos, 2020b). The more positive teachers' epistemological assumptions about the modern form of learning are, the more receptive they seem to be to harnessing technology with didactic and pedagogical targeting (see also: Pierson, 2008). Similarly, pre-service teachers also seem to be more willing to integrate technology into their classrooms in the future, provided that they are familiar with technology and have a positive attitude to such forms of learning (Tzifopoulos, 2016a).

It now seems necessary to focus on research, related to the characteristics of modern teachers, acquired during their professional career and forming their professional identity. Relevant research focuses on teachers' perception of teaching and their profession, how teachers assess their knowledge and skills in the context of their professional development, the priorities given by teachers, either to strengthen their identity by acquiring a satisfactory knowledge base, in the cultivation of pedagogical skills or, now in modern times, in updating their digital knowledge and skills, adapted to the needs of their profession and to the interests of their students (Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop, 2004; Harris, Mishra & Koehler, 2009).

Of course, a teacher, however willing to be actively involved in teaching through ICT, may hamper systemic issues such as school infrastructure and computer laboratories. As one philologist in an ICT training programme states: *"Although I can't think of a specific case, the difficulties start from the limited to non-existent availability of the computer lab. So I'd rather stay in class. Usually, in the schools I have worked in there are 1-3 laptops available for teachers. That's why I try to carry my own laptop, where I have installed and the programs and educational software I need. But it is not always easy (...).The difficulties do not mean, of course, that we have to give up, because there are other positive experiences, where the ICT laboratory is available and modern and where children are learned by the teacher to work in groups and familiar with ICT".*

This teacher, despite the obstacles he encounters daily in his teaching practices, overcomes them, giving "fist" courage and a resounding role model by other teachers. This teacher may be teaching today through distance education platforms, because it is easy for him or because he has experimented enough in the context of shaping his professional identity, but let us consider how a teacher can teach through e-learning today, when previously he has had no similar familiarity or had no positive epistemological beliefs about teaching by digital means. It's like throwing a man into the sea, knowing he can't swim. What life jacket will he be caught from to be saved?

The truth is that *"high tech needs high touch"* (Naisbitt, 1984). And this finding comes to answer the timeless question of whether the teacher is at risk from the introduction of technology into education. We must be reassured that training cannot work on autopilot, only by using specialized digital means. That's definitely where the plane will either fall or crash somewhere. The role of the teacher is a catalyst for this whole process. That is why he/she must be trained and have skills that will enable him/her, as in the current situation, to exploit the technology operationally and effectively. The myth that technology is coming to replace the teacher should not concern us (at least for now). But, on the other hand, in order for a teacher to be at the forefront of "war" he/she must also have the appropriate training (Tzifopoulos, 2014; Marbán & Mulenga, 2019). At this point, I would like to add to my reflections data from ICT courses attended by university students who are preparing for the teaching profession through their initial education. This is because these elements may concern us about the future of teacher education and which should focus from now on.

Studies regarding university curricula, which prepare teachers (preschool teachers, primary school teachers and philologists), outline the situation regarding the courses offered and related to digital tools. In Sweden, for example, in the curricula that prepare preschool teachers, the targeting is explicit: They prepare their teachers, focusing on ICT and strengthening their digital professional identity (Swedish National Agency for Higher Education, 2011), on the grounds that technology contributes to the all-round development of infants (McCarrick & Li, 2007). In the study programmes of the University Schools that prepare tomorrow's preschool teachers in Greece, it is noted that there are theoretical and practical courses, as well as courses related to distance education (less) with which pre-service teachers come into contact (Tzifopoulos & Bikos, 2016). However, of the 44 courses recorded for ICT, only 1/3 of them (14 courses) are compulsory. 7 of the compulsory courses (half of them) are Computer Science courses. A few courses (3) of theoretical orientation for technology (theories for educational technology and ICT learning) are identified. The other courses (4) have a laboratory optics, linking theory to practice.

The remaining 30 are optional courses, 4 are Computer Science courses, 7 courses related to theoretical issues for technology and the remaining 19 courses, are characterized as “application courses”. We identify courses with the following titles: "Design, implementation and evaluation of actions and materials of modern and asynchronous distance learning", "Online tools", which are close to current logic and teaching with modern educational platforms. We conclude that academic institutions for early childhood education offer ICT courses, which as a whole are more optional courses. These enable the student to come into contact with technology and e-learning. However, as kindergarten is the first school institution with which a child comes into contact, it must take into account issues of cognitive, social and emotional development and connect them with urgent

technologies. Clearly, the targeting of these academic institutions should be close to the pedagogical exploitation of the media and the cultivation of digital skills of modern preschool teachers.

The study of the curricula of the Schools of Primary Education in Greece (Tzifopoulos, 2019a), counted the courses, either compulsory or optional, which are offered to pre-service teachers. In particular, 7 of the 9 university departments offer from 4 to 10 ICT courses to primary school candidates. In total, of the 84 courses offered, which concern computer and ICT, 12 of them (16.7%) are compulsory and, as can be seen through their contents, the 8 courses combine theoretical orientation knowledge and laboratory issues. 2 are theoretical courses and 1 course has a laboratory character. It is noted that the student, who prepares for teaching in primary school, mainly through free elective courses, has the ability to acquire more specialized knowledge and enhance his/her technical and pedagogical skills with the contribution of digital technology (Programming Languages, WebQuests, Digital Games, Digital Comics, Virtual Learning Environments, Wikis, Blogs, Websites, STEM Applications, Video Editing, Google Apps, etc.).

As this research has shown, tertiary education institutions preparing teachers for primary education offer their students a small number of compulsory ICT courses (12) and a disproportionately larger number of elective courses (72), which are more specialized, which helps to deepen students' concepts and applications, useful for the educational process; It is noted that the modern teacher is mainly equipped with a basic grid knowledge and secondary with digital pedagogical skills.

Finally, the study of the curricula of the University Schools that train philologists [Philology, History-Archaeology (Ethnology), Philosophy-Education (Psychology)] is found that the majority of courses are offered, related to basic technical knowledge of digital media. However, there are very few references to courses that attempt to link ICT with literary courses and with applications that will be useful in the future for the modern teacher and for assisting his/her educational process (Tzifopoulos, 2016a; 2016b).

From the above, it is understood that the readiness of the pre-service teachers in digital tools can be enhanced by their basic training and by the attendance of courses that will offer up-to-date knowledge on ICT in education. The teachers seem to prepare more effectively for their profession, when they acquire stimuli, theoretical background, and improve their skills based on modern educational requirements (Tsitouridou & Vryzas, 2004). On the basis of official declarations, tertiary education institutions must aim, more than any other time, not only at a computer-based knowledge approach -which, unfortunately, seems to be true even today- but, above all, on a functional dimension of pedagogical utilization of ICT by pre-service teachers (Sheard, Carbone & Hurst, 2010).

Student teachers, therefore, may be considered familiar, at least, with basic computer programs and related web applications, and their initial education has contributed to this, but that is not enough. What about the functional use of technology, what about the proper exploitation of digital learning environments, what about the rules of ethics and communication that need to be followed in distance education? This is reflected today when a teacher attempts to connect to his/her online classroom, but various problems arise that he/she cannot manage. Consider how it feels to be a teacher who has not received any basic ICT training, who has not been trained and, of course, who is not often willing to do so.

How are we sure and we are saying that everything is working as it should through distance education? The fact that the teachers can post educational material on the platform does not make them digitally literate, does not enrich their professional identity or, automatically, contribute to the improvement of the digital identity of their students. Do teachers have relevant knowledge? Do they post the files in the correct format? Can students edit the files that their teachers send or print the tasks, write on them and either "scanning" them or send them as photos?

4. Reflections on the future of education

This paper is neither intended to blame nor to expose, nor to influence in any direction. On the contrary, it is one of my concerns, which is also based on scientific orientation. All this recording starts with the question: "*Why did all this have to happen now and did not find us prepared or even suspicious?".* I am also particularly concerned that many paradoxical elements are presented in our training. On the one hand, we have had bans on digital means, we have spent thousands of research pages on how harmful digital tools are to our students, "tearing down the bridge" of the school with that of society. While, on the contrary, today the leadership and the Ministry of Education are rushing to energize the role of digital media, the environments of distance education, which are being exploited, and to stress the positive nature of such a form of learning.

So, if we accept that it is a forced step forward, which can lead us to something good and beneficial for education, my next question is: *"That's what all this is about? The next day will find us again in desks, in seats, in dark and wet classrooms, in traditional teaching with students and teachers who do their job, in the context of their public service?"*. I cannot accept this and I will consider it if not hypocritical, at least pointless. That's because, since the state spent large sums on distance education, why would this whole project go to waste?

Let us learn from the pandemic. Let us discuss wise, methodically and systematically the day after the pandemic about the future of modern education. Where can we be led? What do the relevant research tell us about the measures taken and forced? What do teachers, parents and students think about distance education? What do academic circles have to suggest about this measure and how could make it real in our school?

I do not speak dogmatically about the use of a purely distance education model, but I am thinking about creating a learning model in which e-learning has a place, has a specific role and will be there, in cases where it should be exploited by schools either individually or collectively. After all, any innovation hides in it the risk, the taking of responsibility and the change of a linear course of things. In this sense, it is timely than ever what the Austrian economist, Joseph Alois Schumpeter (1942) said, when he defined innovation as a "creative destruction". So destroying something old and ordinary (a routine situation at work), even under pressure, something new, different, innovative can emerge, leading to increased productivity. An apt example of changing and subverting statics can be an inconsequential situation or an economic crisis, which will lead necessarily to change and a "creative revival", with unbearable destruction (Schumpeter, 2006). After all, intelligence is the ability to adapt to change, as the British physicist, Stephen Hawking (1942-2018) said. *So, what does the pandemic teach us...?*

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