

Permanent Education, a Reality of the Information Society

Dr. Cristina Popescu

Department of Information and Documentation Sciences
Faculty of Letters, University of Bucharest
E-mail: cristinapopescu07@yahoo.fr

Dr. Cristina Popescu, lecturer at the Department of Information and Documentation Sciences of the Faculty of Letters, University of Bucharest, holds courses of librarianship and bibliography and takes interest in studying the informational feed-back implied by the variety of services – both traditional and electronic – offered to the beneficiaries by the info-documentary structures.

Abstract

The intellectual activity, as an essential element of the informational culture, is not characterized by a „scientific disorder”, it imposes organization and rigorousness, and the abilities acquiesced in this process are considered the key factor of a life-long training. This is the first step in achieving the educational targets. During their whole lifetime, people should develop their informational aptitudes acquired during the undergraduate age.

Using their creative and professional competency and with the support of integrate programmes, experts in information sciences ought to actively contribute to the educational process, offering help to students in their aspirations of accumulating, developping and cultivating their skills and faculties, their knowledge and values necessary to continue their education during the entire life.

Keywords: *permanent education, study and learning, education-goals and objectives, education-self-learning*

The permanent education started as a response to the contemporary life needs, as the only solution for man’s adjustment to the epoch. „The technical and scientific revolution is accompanied by numerous

„explosions” – informational, technical –, by challenges, as Paul Legrand calls the exigencies which constrain any contemporary human being. Gaston Berger reduces the characteristics of the present epoch to some issues of man’s education: people’s increasing interdependence, the mobility of individuals, masses and situations, the speed of the history as a distinctive and selection factor” (1).

During the last decades, both scientists and adepts at various social life fields started to identify a new type of questions, as, for instance, the continuous deterioration of the environment, the limited character of the natural resources, the massive population growth.

These problems regarding the whole mankind are interconnected, highly accentuated by the interdependence of the realities in the contemporary world.

The universal character of the issues of the coeval world (without exceptions of countries and regimes); its global nature (as it concerns all life aspects); its rapid and hardly predictable evolution (people face completely new problems); its multidisciplinary character, with powerful and numerous connections; its managerial character (it requires prompt answers, creativity, financial efforts).

These problems have generated, both politically and culturally, including education, a number of imperatives: *peace defending, environment rescue, promoting a new economic order.*

According to the answers given to the above mentioned imperatives by the education systems, there are:

- skeptical answers, from people looking upon education systems as deprived of any significant role in preparing mankind for the future world (their number is small);
- a great number of specialists who believe in the power of education and in its contribution, with specific resources, to building the future society.

The latter consider libraries as part of the triad education-library-development, obviously intertwined, as Kant stated „education is an activity of man’s disciplining, cultivating, civilizing and moralizing and the aim of the education is to form an individual in the best form he is capable of” (2).

The intellectual education, an outcome of a continuous study, presupposes two interactive elements: the *all round and the vocational education.*

The *all round education* represents the fundamental knowledge necessary to every man. It comprises a system of knowledges and

assimilated skills during the educational act, conferring the individual the possibility of elaborating an overall view on the world.

We could speak of culture in an objective sense when we refer to all the material and spiritual values created by the society and, in a subjective sense, we refer to the process of assimilation of such values by man.

All round education includes accepted cultural values and their effects are visible in a range of intellectual capacities of instrumental, operational and functional nature.

„Although we cannot deny the fact that there are (and will always be) a set of knowledges and competences which must be gained during the initial stage of education, the contemporary society obliges the individual to undergo a continuous training in order to adapt himself to new solicitations.” (3)

The *vocational training* consists of a system of information, skills, abilities and capacities to exert a profession or a group of professions, allowing the individual's integration in the society by means of a profession. (4)

The vocational training registers directions and tendencies:

- specialization and adding components of the common knowledge to the specificity of a profession, transmitting specialty knowledges as well;
- the logic of obtaining a professional culture does not imply a narrow specialization (specialization should be progressive in the framework of the all round education).

The vocational education means to practice a profession aiming at opening the horizon on the social organization of work and production. This should endow young people with the capacity of understanding the consequences of the results of their work upon the social becoming.

The influence of the common education on the vocational knowledge resides in the fact that the first one contributes to the development of the psychic capacities of the personality ensuring the conditions favourable to assimilating professional skills.

The influence of the all round education on assimilating professional skills is clearer in the case of changing profession. The separation of both components generates an alteration of the plan of personality formation.

Rene Maheu says that further education is meant to summarize and inspire the renewal efforts in the modern education: „No re-conversion needs such attentive studies from a vast and complex perspective. It is about, in fact, about including the pre-graduate as well as the university

education in a total synthesis, in which the extra-school education and the so-called adult education, generally considered marginal, are designed to appear as the centre of the discipline of the spirit”.

Herbert Gerjouy stated that „Tomorrow’s illiterate will not be the man who can’t read; he will be the man who has not learned how to learn.” (5)

Actually, the process of learning unfolds on the basis of some anticipatory elements, that is on prospecting the state of things which is to host the activity of series of graduates.

The function of the education gathers a prospective dimension in the contemporary context: education is double-folded, a premise and a consequence of the development, being a factor of social climbing, of economic and social growth and the degree of education depends on this development.

The education does not consist only in what the school offers. It must continue after schooling, during one’s whole lifetime. “Tota vita schola est” (Comenius) or “Man learns throughout his life”, are usually mentioned sayings, having in view the process of conventional and non-conventional learning process.

The permanent education intervenes „as an element of solution in some situations in our society, results of the relations between different generations”. (6)

This type of education represents „an integratory process of all the educational influences on the individual - in various and specific modalities - along his/her lifetime. The permanent education should be understood as a principle of organizing education. It has, ultimately, a pragmatic character for organizing contemporary education”. (7)

Imposing this principle is due to a series of conditions, out of which we mention:

- the technical and scientific revolution which led to the „explosion” of knowledge and to a high perishability of knowledge;
- the massive change of the economic and social status of many people (the labour force is passed over to the services and research sectors;
- extension of the spare time (if used creatively, it can become a source of social progress).

The permanent education has two component parts: an all round and a vocational one, closely tied and interactive. It has a corrective function, aiming to maintain and improve the quality of life.

School needs a well prepared pupil/student regarding self-education and self-learning and this is supported by a constant implication of the library in the process of knowledge.

Further education presupposes a professional perfecting (post-graduate courses).

In fact, only a permanent education ensures a proper “life insertion”, in the “everyday reality”, the “perfect harmonization of the requests of the labour forces in the society with people’s aptitudes and wishes”. (8)

The *school* is the first and most important education and permanent education factor. George Văideanu noticed that „All the worldly studies and experiments have demonstrated that, what is not fundamentally achieved during the initial formation, can only be realized with difficulty and great expenses later on.” (9)

Thus, the school should ensure the preparation for self-education after graduation, and the systematic and organized further education.

Institutional school factors interact with other factors which usually mark our personalities: the library, the radio-tv, the press, the theatre; the cinema, the internet; university extensions; exhibitions, museums, symposia, scientific sessions, conferences.

There are, however, a category of *general factors* – social progress, cultural scientific and technical development; changes produced in most social and professional activities; man’s thirst of knowledge; necessity of re-structuring education and learning to follow the social, technical, scientific and cultural progress – the basis of a permanent education.

The forms of permanent education organized in schools/university have in view the preparation of the young people for self-education and permanent education by:

- students’ active participation in teaching activity,
- students’ answering and discussing concepts, laws, definitions,
- participating to new theoretical and practical experiments,
- doing some homework independently,
- individual studying,
- making reports, essays, communications coordinated by a teacher.

The forms organized by the permanent education systems are achieved by: post-graduate/post-university courses, professional upgrade courses, management/marketing courses, PhD courses.

The relatively free spontaneous forms of permanent education – those which focus on the idea of self-education, by interrelating, with other forms of education – are: education through independent readings;

education through visiting, excursions, exhibitions, museums; education through cultural and scientific activities; mass-media education.

In the context of the permanent education, the relation between education-self-education presents the following aspects:

- education and self-education must have a balanced and continuous relevance;
- self-education is neither the opposite of education, nor identical;
- self-education bears the same elements as the education (goal, object, subject, means, methods). The individual can become subject of education courses at any age, self-education implying a certain degree of maturity;
- self-education has demonstrated the necessity of its continuation. It is the only way to face the new social, economic, cultural-political development of the epoch we live in;
- self-education is achieved only by our own forces, without any help or appeal to education institutional factors;
- self-education is an outcome, but also a condition for the proficiency of the education, it is a completion of the education.

New education forms are an answer of the education systems to the imperatives generated by the problems of the contemporary world. They appear due to new needs. Among the educational forms can be identified: education for democracy and man's rights, ecological education, education through health, intercultural education. (10)

Mastering techniques of the intellectual work, doubled by a strong motivation, leads to a consolidation of the knowledge assimilated in school and university through individual effort. These methods contribute to achieving a fundamental desire of the modern education, that of "teaching a student how to learn". These techniques create a style of intellectual work specific to each individual.

The main directions of action are the following:

- students are guided how to elaborate ideas and summaries of partial readings of the read papers;
- students are initiated in making and presenting essays, accounts and communications as efficient methods in creative work request;
- students are taught to use methods and techniques of coming up with individual and group projects, including project management;
- students are advised to use scientific research methodologies from the perspective of the standards imposed by the process of Bologna and the European Union;

- students are given access to use auxiliary instruments for enriching their knowledge and achieving learning tasks (dictionaries, encyclopaedias, chrestomathies, mass-media etc.);
- students should follow a rational daily work and rest schedule;
- elaborating and printing guides for students to use techniques of intellectual works are necessary;
- students are abillitated to learn efficient learning techniques by including such subject matters in the curricula

Thus, an essential goal for the intellectual education to attain is represented by young people's ascertaining a system of scientific knowledges, mind skills and capacities indispensable to their professional and personal evolution to meet the needs of competitiveness.

All these requirements are to be accomplished in the libraries which support the education system, which are and will be the provider of a permanent and unconditional assistance for real performance.

Bibliographic References

- (1) POPESCU, Tiberiu. *Educația adulților*. București Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, 1974, p. 29.
- (2) KANT, Immanuel. Apud: CUCOȘ, Constantin. *Pedagogie*. Iași: Polirom, 1998, p. 26.
- (3) PĂUN, Emil. *Educația permanentă: reflecții teoretice: [online]*. [Cited: 03.12.2011]. Available from Internet: http://www.1educat.ro/resurse/ise/reflectii_teoretice.html
- (4) BONTAȘ, Ioan. *Pedagogie*. București: Editura All, 1996, p. 278.
- (5) GERJOUY, Herbert Apud: TOFFLER, Alvin. *Future Shock*. New York: Bantam Books, 1970, p. 414.
- (6) LENGAND, Paul. *Introducere în educația permanentă*. București: Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, 1973, p. 54.
- (7) PĂUN, Emil. *Op. cit.*
- (8) JINGA, Ioan, Educația permanentă. București: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1979. Apud: NECULAU, Adrian. *Educația pentru toți și reprezentarea ei socială: [online]*. [Cited: 19.11.2011]. Available from Internet: http://www.1educat.ro/resurse/ise/reprezentarea_sociala.html
- (9) VĂIDEANU, George. Educația permanentă: conceptul și incidentele educației permanente asupra învățământului. În: *Pedagogie: (ghid pentru profesori)*. Iași: Universitatea "Al. I. Cuza", Facultatea Istorie-Filosofie, 1986, p. 217.
- (10) Educația și problematica lumii contemporane. In: *Introducere în pedagogie: Partea I: [online]*. p. 22. [Cited: 27.11.2011]. Available from Internet: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/57123842/ParteaI>