Abstract: Educational policies documents at European level reaffirm the statute of teachers as key actors in any strategy that targets the socio-economic stimulation and development. For instance, as part of the European strategy for development by 2010, the Report of the European Council on the concrete objectives of educational and formation systems mentioned, first on the priority list, the increase in quality and efficiency of educational and formation systems in the European Union and the improvement of initial and continuous formation programmes for teachers. Traditional formation practices no longer offer those who train to become educators all the competences needed in order to prepare students to face the professional activity successfully in a society and economy based on knowledge. Teaching in the Society of Knowledge include: the actual use of the new technologies in the classroom in order to promote the necessary competences for the 21st century; the identification of ways in which students and teachers can use computers and Internet to improve the learning process through research, communication, collaboration and through strategies and instruments specific to productivity; the offering of learning opportunities through practical experiments and creating curricular projects and evaluations which relate to the national standards in the field of education and technology; didactic strategies which encourage the focusing on the student and formation of superior level thinking abilities; collaboration with the colleagues in order to improve the teaching process by solving problems and participating in improving lesson plans. The teacher is responsible for the creation of an adequate learning environment, and for preparing activities which would facilitate the use of technology by the students in order to learn and communicate. In a modern and efficient educational environment, technology offers students the opportunities: to become capable of using the information and communication technologies; to research, analyse and evaluate information; to use instruments specific to productivity creatively and efficiently; to communicate, collaborate, edit and create; to become well-informed, responsible and involved citizens.

Keywords: educational policies, teaching competences, society of knowledge.

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and formation of superior level thinking abilities; collaboration with the colleagues in order to improve the teaching process by solving problems and participating in improving lesson plans.

The current debates regarding the role of education and school in contemporary society have generated the appearance of educational policies which are a priority for the EU. The direction taken by educational and professional formation systems is towards facilitating and ensuring complete access to economic, political and social life for all citizens. In this context, the Education and Formation Process 2010 project aimed at the European integration process of Romania through substantiation of the educational policies of the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport referring to the access, attractiveness and quality of education and professional formation. The themes promoted were: Improvement of initial and continuous formation of teachers and trainers; development of key competences for a society based on knowledge; attracting a larger number of pupils and students towards the technical-scientific section; improvement of foreign languages learning; ensuring broad access to informational and communication technologies; European mobility and cooperation. (Hanches, L. 2007:10-12)

From the perspective of educational policies, the 2009 communication Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Formation identifies four key challenges for the year 2020 and medium term priorities for the period 2009-2011. These are as follows: Transforming lifelong education and cross-border mobility into reality (through European instruments such as EQF and extending mobility possibilities by using ECTS and ECVET). Improving the quality and efficiency of education and formation (this includes the quality of the teaching and learning staff). Improving innovation and creativity through the development of key competences such as: communication, entrepreneurship, integration of new technologies in the didactic activity, etc. Promoting equity, social cohesion, and citizenship in order to contribute to a sustainable society.

Thus, the documents of educational policies at European level reaffirm the statute of teachers as key-actors of any strategy which aims at socio-economic stimulation and development. For example, A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning, 2001, drawn up by the European Commission, has become a priority debated both by the policies in the educational field and, through its importance, in the aspects which imply economic and social development as well as in the strengthening of social cohesion and development of active citizenship in the economy of knowledge. The perspective of the document drawn up by the European Commission proposes:

- **New basic skills for all**, having as objective: guaranteeing general and permanent access to learning for the purpose of forming and perfecting the skills required by a sustained activity in cognitive society (paragraph 26), namely: skills in information technology; foreign language skills; social skills such as self-confidence, self-management and risk taking become more and more important; entrepreneurship skills highlight the ability to improve individual performance in the workplace. Learning how to learn, how to adapt to change, how to perceive the vast flow of information, become standard skills which every person has to acquire.

- **Extensive investments in human resources**, with the main objective: visible increase in the level of investment in human resources in order to prioritise the most important asset of Europe – its citizens.

- **Innovation in teaching and learning**, proposes the drawing of efficient teaching and learning methodologies and the cultivation of a favourable environment for the lifelong learning process.

- States signal the need to improve the quality of methodology and education framework in the sense of adapting, perfecting and maintaining the skills of those who act in formal and non-formal educational environments. In the following decades, teaching, as profession, faces a major transformation: teachers become counsellors, mentors and mediators. Their decisive role is to help students assume their own learning. The teacher’s essential professional skill, both in formal and non-formal framework, consists in the ability to draw up and put into practice open and participative learning and teaching methods. Active learning supposes motivation to learn, ability to exert critical judgement and knowing how to learn.
- **Rethinking professional orientation and guidance**, which targets the guarantee that each person can easily have access to information and competent advice regarding education offers in Europe throughout his/her entire life.
- **Learning closer to home** which involves bringing the offer of permanent learning as close as possible to the beneficiaries, in their own communities and, wherever possible, through information and communication technology, by creating the possibility of virtual communication between communities situated far from one another (Hanches, L., 2007:21-25).

We also signal, as part of the European strategy for development by 2010, the Report of the European Council on the concrete objectives of educational and formation systems mentioned first on the list of priorities, the increase in quality and efficiency of educational and formation systems in the European Union and the improvement of initial and continuous formation programmes for teachers.

Laura Serbanescu, executive in the Direction of Continuous Formation – MECTS, 2010, presents the national strategy for the formation of teachers, promoted and implemented in the National Strategic Reference Framework 2007-2013, with the following directions of action: professionalizing the teaching career; resizing the report between the theoretical and the practical components of the curriculum for the training of teachers; extending the specific competences of teachers in using information and communication technologies, etc.

At the same time, the approaches in restructuring the curriculum targeted for the next school years – adopting the model of curricular projects centred on competences for all education levels; modifying the curricula, by rethinking the relation between the common curriculum and the curriculum decided by the school, etc. – requires new steps in developing teachers’ skills in projecting and organising the teaching-learning activity (Serbanescu, L., 2010:47-48).

Traditional formation practices no longer offer those training to be teachers all the competences needed to prepare students to successfully face professional activity in a society and economy based on knowledge.

**Teaching in the Society of Knowledge** includes: the actual use of new technologies in the classroom in order to promote the required skills for the 21st century:
- identifying ways in which students and teachers may use computers and the Internet to improve the learning process through research, communication, collaboration and through strategies and instruments specific for productivity;
- offering learning opportunities through practical experiments and creating curricula and evaluation which relate to the national standards in the fields of education and technology;
- didactic strategies which focus on the student and on the forming of thinking abilities at superior level;
- collaboration with classmates in order to improve the didactic process, by solving problems and participating in lesson plans improvement.

In the present context, teachers must be prepared to provide learning opportunities to students based on information and communication technologies. To be prepared to use technologies and know how these technologies can support student learning activities have become competences that have to be found in the professional “repertoire” of every teacher. Teachers have to be prepared to make students benefit from the advantages that technology can bring. Educational institutions, both real and virtual, must have teachers who have the resources and skills necessary in the field of technology and who are able to teach their subject’s specific content while incorporating technology concepts and competences at the same time (http://www.elearning.ro).

A relevant example is the standards and resources developed under the UNESCO Competency Standards for teachers in information and communication technologies (CST-ICT) which provide guidelines to all teachers, especially for planning programmes and training offers for teachers to prepare them to fulfil a key role in developing students’ abilities to use technology. Also, the continuous formation programme “The teaching career in the knowledge society adapted to the North West Region” has as specific objectives: training and certification of teachers in order to implement the course “Training in the society of knowledge”, development of career opportunities for the teachers in the target group.
At the same time, the Intel Teach-TRAINING IN KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY is a training programme in which teachers learn from other teachers how, when and where to bring technology into the lesson plan, focusing on developing higher-level cognitive skills of students. To do this, teachers use new approaches to create assessment and lesson tools that meet educational goals and national standards. This program has as strategic directions: analysis of students’ learning needs (identification of experiences, skills, attitudes and mistakes typical of each student in order to create bridges between what they already know (their prior knowledge) and what they will learn; encouraging autonomy in learning and collaboration; monitoring progress (students’ ability to assume responsibility for their own learning, to demonstrate interpersonal skills, to achieve high quality products, to understand the feedback and to assess the classmates’ work); checking understanding (students become better able to manage their work if they are given methods and assessment tools, as they work on undirected tasks) – also, these strategies are indicative of the time and area where students need extra help or additional training (many of these offer a documentation on the growth of learning over time); demonstrating understanding (students also use these strategies to “think about their own thinking” – the same method can be used for both purposes, but it is important to supply explicit questions and support materials (worksheets) to help students think about what and how they are learning); strategies to demonstrate understanding and skills (products and performances highlighted by portfolios, they are a collection of products and performance, created over time which illustrate efforts, progress and acquisitions of students, while lectures held by students are the means by which students share their portfolios, representative parts of their activity, and discuss their interests, learning and goals).

Both European and national educational policies and practical ones, promoted and implemented, mentioned above prove the current tendencies that lead to the identification of conditions that an efficient contemporary pedagogy would have to meet, in close liaison with the student-centred learning paradigm.

Musata Bocos, 2010, formulates new meanings showing the role of teaching practices where the teacher’s role is to “help students find personalized working and learning strategies adapted to the process of their own training, their own personalities, their own intelligence profile, their own goals” (Bocos, M., 2010:202).

School is called upon to identify the student’s individual profile and to encourage personal development. Customizing training based on the characteristics of each student’s learning characteristics is a major challenge for teachers. The role of technology in learning is demonstrated by facilitating active-participatory strategies, by differentiating learning styles of students, by motivating and increasing the student activism in the lesson.

And “strategic teaching models learning strategies adopted by students and superior intrinsic motivation strategies for the progressive acquisition of more and more complex knowledge” (Bocos, M., 2010:202).

In essence, the teaching skills of teachers in the e-learning community have as premises the fact that the teacher is responsible for the creation of an adequate learning environment, and for preparing activities which would facilitate the use of technology by the students in order to learn and communicate. In a modern and efficient educational environment, technology offers students the opportunities: to become capable of using the information and communication technologies; to research, analyse and evaluate information; to use instruments specific to productivity creatively and efficiently; to communicate, collaborate, edit and create; to become well-informed, responsible and involved citizens – in line with current educational policies and practices.

References


