ICT AND THE NEW TEACHING AND LEARNING SPACES: FROM NEW PEDAGOGICAL MODELS TO VIRTUAL TEACHING AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

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Abstract: *The XXI st century confronts its citizenship with new choices, opportunities and challenges due to the ubiquitous presence of technology into all spheres of life: business and administration, government, education… The profound shifts undergone in the academic field must be viewed by thoughts on the new possibilities that new technologies involve.*

Key words: *ICT, virtual teaching and learning, IT,technologies.*

INTRODUCTION.

Traditional teaching and learning paradigms have been shaken by the impact of the integration of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT from now on) into educational practices at the time that teachers and trainers are confronted by challenges which range from the acquisition of skill and literacy in the usage of IT to the delivery of the necessary tools which will lead students to become knowledge creators and users.

The telematic networks and the Internet – now central to new teaching and learning processes- open up to communication ways which allow unlimited access to information and knowledge, account for a flexibilization of time and space barriers and increase interaction. The Net constitutes an excellent environment which has definitely transformed the different relationships within the educational field and has made possible the emergence of new teaching and learning modalities, which, in turn, require radical pedagogical changes and a redefinition of traditional teaching and learning pedagogical models. According to Cabero (2001), "the flexibilization time-space accounted for by the integration of IT into teaching and learning processes contributes to increase the interaction and reception of information. Such possibilities suggest changes in the communication

models and the teaching and learning methods used by teachers, giving way to new scenarios which favor both individual and collaborative learning".

MAIN PART

The new teaching and learning systems orchestrated around telematic networks offer new perspectives to the traditional concepts of time and space and demand a redefinition of traditional pedagogical models, being the roles of teachers and learners – on the one side, and the re-configuration of educational organization and management the most outstanding shifts to be overcome in the XXIst century educational field. Many authors and institutions such as the European Language Network, ICC (2002:8) coincide in emphasizing the enormous communicative and training possibilities that ICT contain. According to them, new organizational and pedagogical models need to be exploited by teachers so that they can offer a cooperative, collaborative and life-long type of learning to the citizenship of the future. The utilization of ICT learning settings and tools in educational processes, evidently leads to radical changes both in the role of teachers and learners and to the emergence of new teaching and learning environments and methodologies (eLearning, Web-based Learning, Open and Distance Learning) as well as new training modalities (on-line training, on-site training, Blended-Learning, Instructorled Learning/Training, Classroom Training - C-training-…) Finally new virtual training settings aimed at facilitating tools and resources to favor communication and interaction and distributing teaching materials through the web will emerge in order to encourage and promote collaboration and co-operation among the participants in teaching and learning processes.

The impact of the Internet in education in the recent years fosters the vision of a open, global and flexible learning, as authors such as Colás state (2003:33) leading to radical shifts in the teacher's role and competencies. In the framework of this educational landscape the role of the teacher is that of acting as guide and instrument to assure a comprehensive learning process via the Internet, managing the student's learning process by creating - at the same time- new instructional

models set in newly-created virtual environments. Colás (2003:33) understands knowledge manager as the person who is able to manage the student´s skills, abilities and knowledge, motivating and taking benefit of the student´s both individual and collective learning possibilities. The teacher will have to develop skill related to the learning contexts that changes in teaching and learning paradigms require Thus, the teacher's role is multiplied and shifts from being a single transmitter of knowledge to become facilitator and guide of the learning process, integrator of new ICT media, researcher and designer of suitable learning scenarios, collaborator (with other teachers and students), orchestrator, learner and evaluator. The ICC report (2002: 9-16) is especially devoted to the role of teachers of foreign languages determines the skills and competencies a teacher has to master in order to integrate ICT in a successful way. Thus, the report mentions the acquisition of technical, organisational, conceptual skills together with the new literacies: technical, scientific, digital, critical, linguistic, cultural and mediation literacies.

After the changes and roles in function by teachers, the technification of teaching and learning processes is a fact and the educational system of the XXIst century now defined as an information and communication technological model is confronted by an enormous challenge: the different educational institutions have to face the fact that teachers accept to radically change their traditional role in the teaching/learning processes and become instructed to be acquainted with the educational and pedagogical possibilities that ICT-rich learning environments require. Nevertheless, the attitude of teachers towards technology constitutes an object of controversy and provides a variety of confronted opinions.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, the fact that innovative teachers are not always granted certain recognition towards their work and emphasizes at the same time the reluctance on the teacher's part to abandon the traditional role of main cultural transmitter.

Thus, there have been recent studies associated to the use of ICT in teaching practices which have been developed and can be classified into two major stages:

individual (teacher-level barriers) to which we have previously referred and those factors which more straightforwardly have to do with institutions (school-level barriers). As far as teacher level barriers are concerned many authors have investigated in detail their connection with technology.

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