

SCHOOL AS A MEETING POINT OF TEACHERS AND STUDENTS MEMEBERS OF DIFFERENT CULTURES

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Conference Paper

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Abstract

Today's schools differ from the schools of the last century. The role of teachers of the last century differs from the role of today's teachers. The technological development, the rapid dissemination of information has caused the teacher's role to change into a mediator and facilitator in the classroom, while placing the student at the center of attention. The teacher was educated and trained in the past but, by the use of current methods, techniques, and teaching tools, helps in preparing the students to be competitive in the future. The differences are noticeable, because students belong to the "digital natives" generation, while their teachers are members of the "digital immigrant". The aim of this study is to determine some characteristics of elementary school students on the one hand and to determine the meeting point with their teachers on the other hand.

The questionnaire was used as a research tool in this study, which was completed by parents of 260 students aged 7-11. Parents have completed this questionnaire based on their information about their children. The statistical processing of this questionnaire has led to the conclusion that the internet and computer are students' everyday tools. Based on the results of this study and the studies of teaching and learning, the teaching process in our schools will be more effective if the ICT students' skills and experience are used as teaching tools, reading, or as concretization and communication tool.

Keywords: teacher, student, teaching, teaching tools.

“A teacher is the only person who is capable of imparting knowledge and shaping the youth to the wider scope of knowledge. Teachers are capable of living and molding the youth such that their power is paramount as they determine the fate of the society. Both teachers and parents live with the children for a long time and hence they are capable of imparting knowledge, skills and values that cannot be easily challenged by the society.” (Nyerere,1966).

The role of teachers throughout time varies depending on the development of science, technology and society. The 21st century teacher differs from the teacher of the last century. Traditional education is teacher-centered, but in the 21 century education is student-centered. The role from the teacher is passed to students. Students are treated all the same, but in the 21 century individual strengths are discovered and are built up. Students have passive learning and they are easily bored which is different from active learning and motivated students of 21 century classes.

Official education of a society is carried out in schools. However, the premeditated process of education does not end in school, because to be complete it must continue throughout life. School education in schools is achieved through different learning subjects, which teach learning techniques and guide their thinking into learning. For learning to be successful, teaching should be successful as well. Teaching will be successful if it's understood as science and art. Without these two components, the teaching would be unsuccessful and crippled. Schools which our students attend are schools built in the last half of the last century. They are large classroom schools where a large number of students are taught. In the classrooms there is a board in the front on which the teacher writes and there is nothing else. If we wish to receive an insight into the schools of the XXI century, then we must analyze the things that shape it. Schools without students do not exist. Who are the students of the XXI century and who are the teachers of the XXI century schools?

Our students are shaped by the surrounding environment which is electronic and digital. Their environment is dynamic, instant and fast. They are surrounded by means of communication that enable them at any time to be in touch with any part of the world. Knowing these features of the students, schools should have their own premises to meet the needs of the students and the teaching process. The important conditions that must be met by the schools of XXI century are the characteristics of teachers. According to Andrew Churches (2009) XXI century teachers should possess these features:

To be **adaptable**, which means that the teacher should be able to adapt the software and hardware for different ways of teaching, be able to adapt teaching modes for different students, adopt different styles of teaching;

Be a **lifelong learner**, because the students and the teaching process varies over time, so it needs to be developed. This can be done if new things, new methods, new softwares are taught;

To be **visionary**, that is, to predict the development of technology and to use it in teaching, to connect the ideas of others, to use and adapt them to learners with his students;

Collaborator (co-worker), which means using digital collaboration tools to carry out distribution, collaboration and convention;

The **model teacher**, who is to be an example for his students, should be respectable to them. The teacher should cultivate values for the society;

Leaders and risk taker, which means that the teacher should recognize and utilize the abilities of his students to achieve the planned learning goals.

In 1997, Don Tapscott published his book “Growing Up Digital” and “The Rise of the Net Generation” commenting on the influence of the new digital generation in society and business. Tapscott used the term "Net Generation", which refers to young people who have grown surrounded by digital media. According to Tapscott (1997), the reason he uses the term "Net Generation" was because the most significant change affecting this generation was the rise of the computer, the Internet, and other digital media.

Another term that describes this generation of young people is the "Digital natives" of Marc Prensky (2001); he also uses the term "Digital immigrants" to refer to the previous generation. He uses this label by saying that the language of computers and the internet is their first language compared to the previous generation, who are immigrants to this language or digital immigrants have their foreign language. According to M. Prensky, the brain of "digital natives" is physically different from that of the previous generations that is directly influenced by digital technology. This generation has grown into an environment where integral part of its daily life is technology and information. This generation is able to learn formally and informally through the computer (at school or at home). It is the force of social transformation, because this generation that learns differently, plays differently, communicates differently from their parents (D. Tapscot ,2009). This generation changes schools, teachers and families, because its participants are the only people who have computer and internet knowledge. Net Generation’s brain is more developed compared to the brain of their parents’ generation, because “their brain is with more incentives” says Kutcher according to D. Trapscot (2009) as far as 3 years old, also in adolescence.

Net Generation wants its freedom to make decisions in various fields, such as clothing, hiking, jobs, flexibility or job creation. For that, they have been influenced by the internet, which provides many choices and solutions. This generation has many facts about things around the world, so they coexist with the feelings of people. Also this Generation is collaborative, as these young people are constantly in touch. Thanks to the new technology, this connection is realized at any moment. Net Generation supports speed, they prefer the fast internet, because they quickly reach the information they are interested in.

Incorporating digital technology into the teaching process is just part of the reform at the education system. Digital devices in the classrooms where our students study is another way of allowing the teacher become the facilitator, while the students are at the center. For digital classes to be functional and to play their part, it is imperative for teachers to change their worldview on the use of digital technology in the teaching process. According to John Dewey (2003), if we teach today's students as yesterday's students, we have taken them out of tomorrow. Digital devices have their impact in the development of students’ skills. Teachers, parents, academics and children themselves identified the digital skills as given in table below:

Table 1. Green and Hannon (2007)

Social / Personal	Cognitive / Physical	Technical
Communication	Multitasking	Hand-eye coordination
General knowledge	Logical thinking	Technical confidence
Creativity	Problem solving	Web design/content creation
Collaboration	Trial and error learning	
Self esteem	Self esteem	
Parallel processing		
Persistence		
Peer-to-peer learning		
Risk-taking		

Schools are the place where values of a society are created and cultivated. In schools there must be working strategies in the teaching process. The teacher, the teaching and learning process should follow the changes and developments of the 21st century.

Research methodology

In this study questionnaires were used as a research tool. The questionnaire was completed by 260 parents of primary school pupils in Tetova, Gostivar, Struga, who filled the questionnaire instead of their children. The research samples of the study are elementary school students. This study aims to identify and give an overview of the use of computers and internet by the elementary school students. This study includes 129 male pupils. They are from different grades. Their distribution through grades is presented in the table below:

Table 2. Students per classes

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	I	13	5.0	5.0	5.0
	II	7	2.7	2.7	7.7
	III	90	34.6	34.6	42.3
	IV	44	16.9	16.9	59.2
	V	106	40.8	40.8	100.0
	Total	260	100.0	100.0	

Table shows that 40% of students belong to grade V, 17% to grade IV, 35% belong to grade III and 8% to grade II and I.

Do students have internet at home? is the next question of the questionnaire. The answer is given in the table below. The table shows that 90% of students have internet and computers at home. This implies that ICT can be used as a teaching and learning tool.

Table 3. Internet at home

		yes	no	Total
City	Tetova	119	15	134
	Gostivar	45	5	50
	Kercove	1	0	1
	Struga	72	3	75
Total		237	23	260

Pupils regardless of age use ICT every day or even a few times a day. According to the table, 65% of students have every day access to internet. This enables the students to be closer to each other and closer to the sources of knowledge.

Table 4. Access to internet

		Every day	Every week	Rarely	Total
City	Tetovo	80	23	30	133
	Gostivar	39	4	7	50
	Kercove	0	0	1	1
	Struga	47	9	19	76
Total		166	36	57	260

Students are from different schools and cities. They have different approaches depending on where they are from. The table above gives the frequency of internet access depending on which city they live in.

Table 5. Time spent using ICT

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less 1 h	114	43.8	43.8	43.8
	1 h- 2 h	93	35.8	35.8	79.6
	2h- 3 h	36	13.8	13.8	93.5
	more	17	6.5	6.5	100.0
	Total	260	100.0	100.0	

Tab.5 shows how much time students spend using ICT. The majority of pupils spend between 1h and 2 h using ICT. If time is utilized, benefits will be more useful. Also a table below gives information about the time spent using ICT according to grade:

Table 6. Time spent using ICT according to grades

		Less 1h	1 h- 2 h	2 h -3 h	3h and more	Total
Class	I	4	7	2	0	13
	II	7	0	0	0	7
	III	28	38	16	8	90
	IV	28	13	1	2	44
	V	47	35	17	7	106
Total		114	93	36	17	260

Also in Table 6, time spent using ICT is given according to grades. According to this table, students from higher grades spent more time using ICT.

Table 7. ICT for games

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	213	81.9	81.9	81.9
	No	47	18.1	18.1	100.0
	Total	260	100.0	100.0	

According to Table, 7, 82% of students use ICT for playing games. These games develop the spatial skills of students but they may also be harmful if not controlled and if not used for useful and educational purposes. Also Table 8 gives shows the number of students that use ICT for games according to grades:

Table 8. ICT for games by classes

		yes	no	Total
classes	I	13	0	13
	II	7	0	7
	III	73	17	90
	IV	37	7	44
	V	83	23	106
Total		213	47	260

The table above shows that most of the students use ICT for games; this means that using computers for games doesn't depend on their grades. From this we can conclude that if teachers use the students' experience and skills with ICT for teaching and learning, success is guaranteed. For example, if Math teachers apply Math through games, Mathematics would be interesting, full of fun and challenges. Students also use ICT for doing their homework.

Only half of them do homework using ICT and 65% of them use ICT as a communication tool. Teachers' electronic communication with students for education purposes would make time and the use of ICT more useful and rational.

In this research we formulate the hypothesis:

H₀: There is no correlation between students' internet access, students' gender, students' grades or students' place of living.

H_a: There is correlation between students' internet access and students' gender, students' grades or students' place of living.

Table 9. Correlation table
Correlations

		gender	classes	city	Internet acces
gender	Pearson Correlation	1	-.009	.044	.048
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.883	.477	.443
	N	260	260	260	259
classes	Pearson Correlation	-.009	1	-.651**	.042

	Sig. (2-tailed)	.883		.000	.498
	N	260	260	260	259
City	Pearson Correlation	.044	-.651**	1	.030
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.477	.000		.634
	N	260	260	260	259
Internet access	Pearson Correlation	.048	.042	.030	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.443	.498	.634	
	N	259	259	259	259

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From Tab.9 and the values of correlation, coefficient H_0 is accepted and the H_a is refused. This means that there is no correlation between students' internet access and students' gender, students' classes and students' place of living.

Conclusions and proposals

This study has resulted in the following conclusions: New technologies and internet are part of everyday live of elementary school students. According to this research student use technology for communication, playing games and less for home assignments. This generation of students is born with technology and technology is part of their culture. For them the day starts with tablets, smartphones and computers. Students have the experience and skills to use ICT, so teachers should use ICT as teaching and learning tool in elementary schools. Proposals from this study are: elementary school teachers should use ICT as a teaching and learning tool. Teachers should be continuously trained in using ICT for educational purposes. Education faculties should prepare their students for ICT as teaching and learning tools. Computer science faculties should prepare syllabuses for educational purposes. Teachers, parents and students should have handbooks for using ICT. E-books can be used as teaching tools in elementary schools, therefore educational institutions should work in the preparation of these teaching and learning tools. Educational institutions should support ICT.

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