Chapter 2
Integration Approaches of Digital Media in the Teaching/Learning Process

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ABSTRACT
During the last two decades, a generation for which the life in the media environment and the use of media in everyday life has become a norm in Europe and beyond its boundaries. The representatives of this generation are engaged with technologies both at home for their entertainment and use them for learning at school and university. In addition, they would like to experience the integration of technologies in education more frequently and more extensively. The researchers in the field of social sciences have concluded that in general the social contexts in which any individual, including the school student, acquires experience and is learning in modern society have changed radically. Researchers encourage teachers to improve their skills of integrating digital technologies in education that would help students develop their information analysis and evaluation skills in the learning process, which in turn, would decrease the scope of the possible risks caused by digitalization.

SOCIAL CONTEXTS OF LEARNING IN THE DIGITAL CULTURE

Researches summarize the evidence that digital technologies have transformed the lives of children and young adults in the Western culture at such a speed and in a way which nobody – neither the producers of technologies, nor the teachers and parents, nor the researchers of the social processes has ever predicted (Prensky 2010; Postman 1982; Underwood, Farrington-Flint 2015). The internet or the global web nowadays has promoted not only unprecedented democratization and decentralization processes in the society (Eriksen 2001), but it has also transformed the interpersonal communication beyond recognition (Underwood, Farrington-Flint 2015). For instance, social networks, on the one hand, offer novel possibilities to access an enormous amount of digital tools that are useful for communication, cooperation and the exchange of ideas, and on the other hand, the communication with the representatives of the
Digital generation, the cooperation with them in the field of learning change drastically and it becomes more burdensome for the representatives of older generations.

The coming of information and communication technologies in the everyday life of modern students creates the situation which the researchers consider unique – adults often find their learning culture incomprehensible – adults are unfamiliar with the children and young adults’ activities in the internet; their ability to access technologies often is more limited than that of the children; parents and teachers do not recognize symbols and signs which the representatives of the digital generation use in their everyday language (Kron, Sofos 2003; Bleckmann 2012; Rubene, Dinka 2016). Besides, the youngest representatives of our society are able to work with technologies in the way that was beyond the reach and was not known to even their older brothers and sisters some years ago. The latest researches in social sciences serve as evidence that children who are younger than five years old have become the internet users in Europe.

Thus, the technology user in the modern Western society even in the first decade of the 21st century on average was 6–13 years old, but in the second decade we are already speaking about the digital literacy of 3–4 years old children and even the infants (Hüther, Schorb 2005; Spanhel 2006; Bleckmann 2012; Holloway, Green, Livingstone 2013; Dias, Brito, et al. 2016). This is an unprecedented situation – a child who is not able to speak, write and read but uses the internet; this is a radically new social phenomenon. Even the studies of the media pedagogy and psychology theoreticians that have been actively taking place since 60s - 70s of the 20th century offer conclusions and advice for promoting the students' media literacy; however, they do not touch upon the very young ones and the digital technologies (Hüther, Schorb 2005; Spanhel 2006). Studies about this age group of the internet users have been started rather recently in Europe (Holloway, Green, Livingstone 2013) yet the social reality shows that the everyday use of technologies has become a widely spread habit for an increasingly greater number of younger children.

The boundaries of using the digital media among the modern children and young adults are expanding and their learning culture which recently has become one of the topical research issues in social sciences is considered to be one of the most significant challenges for the rest of the society, especially, if we think about parenting and learning at school. The use of online resources has become the chief or the “first priority” for children and young adults; their acquisition of culture has moved from paper or print to the field of digital technologies (Rifkins 2004; Underwood, Farrington-Flint 2015) which requires not only the increase of the virtual learning space at school but also makes teachers think about effective integration of digital media in the teaching/learning process (Goburdhun, Ramsaha 2017).

However, it has been concluded that as regards learning the digital world has largely encapsulated in the environment of spending the free time, i.e., it stays outside the school (Underwood, Farrington-Flint 2015). The representatives of the education system all over the world confirm that the use of digital media at school lacks both the resources and the teachers themselves have insufficient competence for a meaningful digitalization of the teaching/learning process (Kron, Sofos 2003).

Yet, we should not forget that the use of technologies is an essential aspect of the children and young adults’ life – modern students in many respects have constructed their experience with the help of media; media culture is their life space and they use in their learning process the previously accumulated knowledge, skills and attitudes in order to understand and to form new ones (Rubene, Dinka 2016). The virtual learning environment allows the modern student to feel more secure; it is often simply better known and understandable for him.

The effectiveness of applying technologies in education for children and young adults with special needs is particularly emphasized (Standen, Brown 2005) – studies reveal fundamental gains from the