

POST-MODERN EDUCATION AND DIGITAL ECONOMY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE EUROPEANIZATION OF THE WESTERN BALKANS COUNTRY

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***Abstract:** Global trends have sparked radical changes in all spheres of society, based on the knowledge and application of high technologies. Postmodern education is the basic postulate and strategic resource for the prosperity of all creatures and the countries of the Western Balkans. Digital or Internet economies are designed to achieve competitive advantages at the national, regional and planetary levels. The optimal use of intellectual and production capacities in the available areas of organization is required. The Europeanization of the countries of the said subregion implies the incorporation of the existing European Union program documents, based on the implementation of modern information and communication systems and permanent training. The new education paradigm and the digital economy must be harmonized with the needs of a single market, while fostering innovation and entrepreneurship in the context of sustainable social development.*

***Key words:** post-modern education, digital economy, knowledge, Europeanization, information communication technologies, innovation, Western Balkans*

INTRODUCTION

The processes of globalization in recent decades have implied a series of technological and social changes that have transformed the world market and affected the business environment. The period of industrialization reached its peak and the factors on which the success of previous economies were no longer sufficient. These changes have resulted in the industrial era being replaced by the postmodern era - the era of the new economy, which bears the epitome of "Knowledge Economy", or "Digital / Internet Economy". The globalization process has "reduced the world" and imposed a number of new challenges in the process of creating and sustaining economic development and competitiveness. Contemporary business is conducted on a global scale, competition is enormous, so today, in order to survive in the market, it must respond quickly to changes, constantly adapt and strategically manage knowledge and information.

According to the OECD, today's global economy is driven and carried by - knowledge. That is why in modern society, knowledge and education are becoming one of the most significant factors of development and an extremely important developmental resource. Postmodern education, among other essential components, plays a decisive role not only for the progress of one country in general, but also for the progress of each individual. One of the most visible features of our time is the rapid spread of knowledge growth. The development of technology and the widespread use of computers have caused more information to appear on the Internet today in a year than in all previous years of human history. It can be said that today the

total knowledge is doubling from hour to hour.

In recent decades, many national economies have been transformed from manufacturing economies to digital economies. This process is greatly facilitated by the application of information and communication technologies. Knowledge economies are those that are based on the production, distribution and use of knowledge and information. This has a direct impact on the rise in investment in high technology, high sophistication and productivity growth. Many countries today cannot compete with countries that have developed mass production or other resources. It is therefore of the utmost importance that competitive human resources are developed through the application of information and communication technologies in the education system. With the quality of the workforce and the application of information and communication technologies in the modern world, it is possible to secure a significant place in the global community.

In addition to information, knowledge is becoming the most important success factor in the world market. Knowledge includes information, but it also includes know-how, know-why, and the economic future and development of countries are less and less dependent on natural resources, and increasingly on the people who work in it and for it. How successful they will be in their work depends largely on the knowledge they have acquired during their education and which they acquire during their life and work. Differences in knowledge and technological application of knowledge become the main factors that divide the successful from the unsuccessful.

Technological advancement, knowledge, education, vocational training, free movement of labor and capital, as well as other factors of quality of knowledge, have become generators of growth leading to the development and improvement of competitive advantage.

1. POSTMODERN EDUCATION AND IK TECHNOLOGY

Once upon a time, the monopoly of knowledge could last for quite a while, and companies and countries had tens of years to redeem their specific advantages and uniqueness globally. As knowledge spread very slowly, it took competitors quite a while to find out what was going on and to "copy" the idea. This is no longer the case today, however, because knowledge is spreading around the world almost instantaneously. Success and survival in such an environment can only be achieved by those who are able to produce and permanently enhance and strategically manage their own knowledge.

History has shown and proved that every economic development has been substantially determined by scientific and technological development. During the historical development of human society, the role of science has changed, but also the role of man as the main driver of change. "During the first scientific and technological revolution, man - worker was the main driver of change, and production was an important experience. The main role of science in this period was to analyze what happened and how something works. During the second scientific and technological revolution. At that stage, science is the driving force and the bearer

of development is man-expert. Today, in the period of the third scientific and technological revolution, science is the key to development. It is leading because progress is made on the basis of the results of scientific research. "(Sundać, Švast, 2009).

The added value that is being created today in the business process comes primarily from the knowledge, abilities and skills of the people who participate or collaborate in it. Human knowledge is the basis that all modern companies must rely on if they are to reach high standards in today's extremely competitive global market. In line with emerging trends, a successful future and the path of development of each country must be a knowledge-based economy, ie. higher education. The turn towards information and technological development shows that modern society is undergoing major changes, which are not remembered by the dimensions and richness of content in the development of human society so far. New technologies have made education more massive, dynamic, flexible and open. New trends, driven by changes in the global market, are also driving changes in education. "In the transition from the industrial society to the information society, it is important to note that the strategic resource in the industrial society was capital, while in the information society, it is knowledge that is not only renewed but self-developing" (Neskovic, 2011).

Table no. 1. Comparative analysis of traditional and contemporary education (Nešković, 2017)

TRADITIONAL EDUCATION	EDUCATION SUPPORTED BY ICT TECHNOLOGIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teaching oriented to the realization of the content of the program - Passive model of teaching content transfer - The emphasis is on the lecturer and the teaching process - The implementation of the program is monitored and evaluated - Insufficient encouragement of students to actively acquire knowledge - There is no flexibility in the timing and location of the teaching process - Frontal work is applied - Classical teaching aids and classical pedagogical principles are used - Printed teaching materials and classic models are used to display them - The venue for the process is a classic classroom - Modern ICT tools do not apply 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teaching oriented towards the realization of goals and outcomes - Emphasis is placed on the student and the learning process - The role of the lecturer in teaching has changed - The quality of education is monitored and evaluated - The extent to which outcomes are achieved is measured - The student occupies a central place - Internet, knowledge bases and educational software are used - Interactive work models are used - Modern teaching theory is in force - Multimedia interactive models are used - Interdisciplinarity - Virtual reality - Financial and economic effects are increasing - With the use of the internet service remote learning is enabled, ie. online learning

An unpredictable and changing environment of high complexity requires having adequate knowledge of the use and evaluation of constantly new information. In the context of the dynamics of change, the need for postmodernism education implies education in order to master the necessary skills and information to use new work programs. This requires a new conception of education - education for modern society. Increasing population, increasing demand and limited resources have led the economy to seek the highest quality and most creative staff, the latest equipment and the best technology.

The fact is that today the richest countries in the world have achieved their competitiveness through continuous learning, research, innovation, strategic management of their own knowledge and implementation of information and communication technologies in business and all other processes. Education positively contributes to economic growth in two ways (Nešković, 2015):

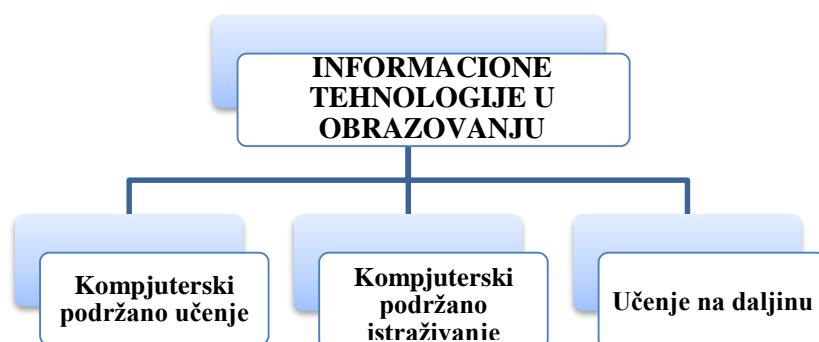
Strengthens the quality of the workforce and contributes to the increase in worker productivity;

A more educated workforce is more capable of innovating and adopting new technologies.

Picture no. 1. Presentation of information and communication technologies in education (Nešković, 2014)

Conventional, traditional education is based on the assumption of a reproductive, static, and theoretical approach. However, such an educational system does not work in modern society, as it creates staff who do not have the capacity to respond adequately to changes in society.

The contemporary concept of education views education as a lifelong learning process. Modern society needs new skills and additional knowledge, while constantly promoting sustainability. It is clear that education has become the basic instrument and fundamental force of development, not only in the life and behavior of the



individual, but also in the way of managing states and communities globally. Regardless of the goals, the basic quality of

modern education should be the transition from reproductive to productive education, from static to dynamic, from inapplicable to operational. All of the above, necessitates the need for the education system to evolve in accordance with the requirements and needs of a modern knowledge-based society. The increasing importance of knowledge resources confronts individuals with new demands, choices, and new responsibilities. The concept of an educated person means education that will develop the ability to understand and use constantly new knowledge and which will provide every individual in modern society with the required readiness and literacy.

Global processes in the economy and society have spurred a number of changes in the education system. Postmodern education today has become a system based on openness and connectivity to technology, which requires constant upgrading of its structure and adaptation to changes in the environment.

New communication technologies and the Internet have provided new educational opportunities, but this also entails the formation of new requirements in relation to traditional educational institutions. Maintaining teaching standards and preserving the quality of work of educational institutions is only possible today through the use of information and communication technologies and constant innovation in the teaching process (Neskovic, 2018).

The impact of globalization on education is caused by the impact of globalization on the production process. As the global economy expands, there is a need for specialist education and adequate workforce. Of particular interest is the impact of the globalization of economic trends on education. Research shows and practice confirms that economic globalization and the IT revolution require radical changes in the very nature of the learning process and the modernization of the education system.

The most important task of education is to monitor changes in all spheres and to implement changes in relation to them. The traditional definition of education starts from the understanding of education as the systematic acquisition of scientific knowledge of nature, society and human thought. However, the modern understanding of education starts from the fact that education is a system of institutional acquisition of knowledge and empowerment of people to acquire the knowledge, skills and habits they need, and the 21st century emphasizes that a diploma is not a guarantee for a job unless they have the appropriate personal qualities as what they are (Neskovic, 2016):

- ability for teamwork and collaboration
- sense of responsibility and personal discipline
- the ability to make decisions and the willingness to take risks
- initiative, curiosity and creativity
- professionalism, striving for perfection in reaching borderline opportunities, etc.

The importance of knowledge in human life, living and acting is increasing. It contributes to the expansion and deepening of human knowledge and cognition, enhancing practical action in all areas of human interest, developing, faster and easier business operations, managing business processes and saving available resources, fuller realization of human rights and freedoms, participation in social and state decision-making and directing the path to the future. All this affects the motivation of the individual and each community in acquiring more knowledge and developing information and communication skills and culture, especially since information and communication knowledge becomes one of the main conditions for advancement in business, in the profession, in every field of

human and economic activities, that is, in the life and work of each individual and community.

2. The digital economy in the context of the Europeanization of the Western Balkans

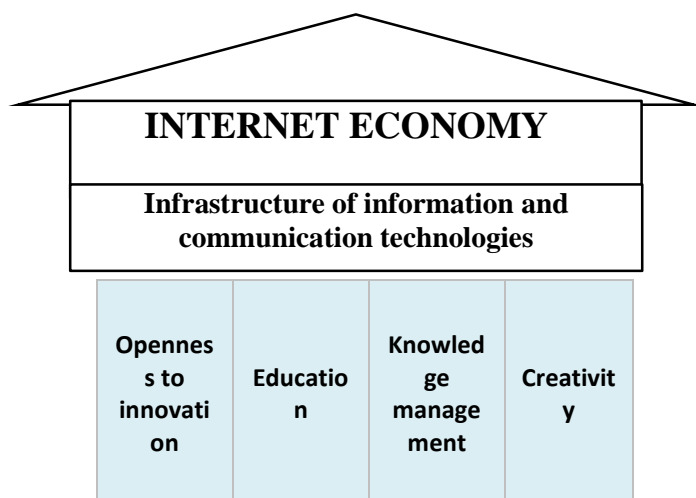
The rapid changes that determine the process of globalization have led to major changes in the market. The traditional market has been replaced by a new market, which is dynamic, changeable and rich in information. All market participants today struggle to find such sources of competitive advantage that will bring them better financial and other performance. The goal is to be better than others, and today, this can only be achieved with knowledge, innovation and creativity. In the so-called "old economy" the key to competitiveness was cheap labor, raw materials and machinery.

Today's global environment is evidently characterized by constant change, increased competition and market uncertainty, the expansion of the digital economy, where only those who are fast learners, respond quickly to change and use all available knowledge and information are successful. In addition, well-designed and implemented strategies are essential for the achievement of goals, with the aim of targeting the most effective achievement of goals and responding to changes in the environment. The aim is to create competitive advantages faster than competitors can copy them, and therefore activities should be directed to segments in which the country has already acquired a positive status, with the most efficient use of production, intellectual and information and communication resources. It is the only path that ensures competitiveness and survival in today's global business environment, and only by applying these rules will countries be able to compete with anyone, anywhere, anytime (Neskovic, 2014).

Today there is a trend of change in the educational system all over the world. In line with the recent changes, the education system must include the application of information and communication technologies. The traditional form of teaching, where teaching is a central part of the teaching process, is attempted to be replaced by a more effective form of learning. Highly globalized times and changing ways of doing things require the education process to be flexible, agile, quick to learn and adapt to the situation. Considering the continuous progression of technology, the application of modern technological solutions in learning implies all modern solutions applicable to the teaching process, including the possibility of artificial intelligence, process simulation and virtualization of certain processes in the field of education.

Research in the world shows that information and communication teaching aids enable control, regulation, management of teaching and learning through continuous feedback that has strong motivational power. Modern digital devices enable a completely different organization of educational work and provide better and more efficient emission and absorption of knowledge. The application of information and communication technology solutions in education is a fundamental driver of the development of the educational process. Contemporary education requires active learning, based on available technical support. The introduction of modern technologies into the teaching process has led to significant changes in existing teaching and learning methods (Nešković, Jovanović, 2017).

Picture no. 2. Components Required for Development in the "Internet Economy"



In order to keep up with the times, it is necessary to innovate in the educational sector. The implementation of information and communication technologies in the educational process involves encouraging new approaches to teaching and new teaching methods, which aim to improve the quality of learning. These innovations must be aimed at raising the level and quality of work, with the most rational use of the staff, time and creativity of teachers and students. Technology implemented in the educational process has great importance and important pedagogical effects, for both teachers and students. Teachers of this technology are enabled to use modern teaching methods, to direct students towards research, to always have feedback on the acquired knowledge, etc. On the other hand, information and communication technologies in teaching enable students to develop the ability to work independently, to easily and effectively exchange their knowledge, to use various sources of information, etc. The most valuable knowledge that can be gained today is the acquisition of computer literacy, ie. Knowledge of how, where and how to find the information you need. Adequate application of information and communication technologies in a country's

educational system involves three steps (Babic, Matkovic, Sobic, 2006):

1. teaching staff competence
2. providing financial resources for smooth functioning and improvement of the education system
3. acceptance and implementation of modern information and communication technologies

These are three crucial conditions for advancing education and creating the preconditions for developing the most important resources of a country - human resources. Also, this is the only way for countries that do not have favorable geographic, natural or other resources to successfully compete and compete with developed countries. A key segment is the application of information and communication technologies in the development of competitive intellectual potential. The increasing civilizational need to solve the problem has led to the fact that it was only a matter of time before education would experience expansion and cross the boundary of the traditional. However, due to the limitations of information transmission techniques in the past, there was no physical opportunity for a more serious development of distance learning. Earlier today there were no technological advances such as computers and the Internet, so distance learning was realized through the means of communication between people in remote geographical areas at that time. These were primarily letters and correspondence, since then mail was the most developed form of communication (Neskovic, 2016).

Progress in development and realization is made by the invention of radio and television when there are unprecedented opportunities for the transmission of knowledge at a distance. Massive and fast transmission of information over long geographical distances is possible. Only with the discovery of new, faster and more powerful ways of transmitting information

did the conditions for the development of modern ways of acquiring knowledge be created. New audio and image processing capabilities have now become accessible to anyone with a personal computer. The possibilities for easier and cheaper creation of multimedia educational content have been opened, and with the advent of the Internet and the possibility of sharing these contents around the world. The multiplicity of ideas and the possibility of their rapid exchange and distribution through the Internet has significantly improved the quality of educational material, and there has been an interest in individualizing the learning process. In addition to classical education, today there is a need for permanent acquisition of new knowledge throughout life, which is the result of constant changes in technology and the introduction of computer technology in almost all areas of human activity.

Today, we live in a technologically rich environment, so education also needs changes in line with the education imperatives of the 21st century. In this sense, post-modern education introduces multimedia systems, computer-aided learning, distance learning, virtual schools and other technologies that lead to increased student activity, a better evaluation of knowledge and advancement in accordance with individual abilities and backgrounds.

In modern teaching conditions, it is no longer a question whether modern information and communication technologies should be applied, but how and how to apply new technologies to improve the quality of teaching and make learning more efficient. As the most promising area of the 21st century, information and communication technologies offer the opportunity to take advantage of the Internet and to acquire new knowledge through distance learning. Classical forms of classroom education are increasingly being replaced by more

modern forms, taking advantage of information and communication technologies. One of the basic features of this type of education is that there is no direct contact between the teacher and the student.

This method of education opens up new opportunities for lifelong learning for people of all ages, regardless of their location. Traditional education also provides everyone with an opportunity to study, but requires regular classes, which can often involve moving to another city or making long trips to a place of learning. One of the biggest advantages of learning online is that it saves time and money and is a much easier way to acquire the skills you need. The considerable amount of time that traditional education requires is the main reason that prevents many employed people, as well as those with family, from perfecting themselves. Online education, on the other hand, offers the freedom for the individual to organize himself and to decide at which point he will take classes online, take tests, or ask questions to the lecturer regarding any ambiguities. This kind of education is an ideal solution for anyone who plays a big role in life and work.

However, in order to improve education, it is necessary to implement applied informatics into the education system. An essential prerequisite for this is the computer skills and literacy of both teachers and students. Information technology-based education involves at least three basic components (Zgaga, P. et al. 2013):

1. Computer Assisted Learning - most commonly used and well-suited to interact to enhance existing learning technology and make teaching more dynamic and interesting in order to gain new knowledge. Computer-aided learning includes multimedia educational software, computer simulations, virtual reality, artificial intelligence, and more. The use of information technology enables

individual knowledge acquisition, continuous feedback, monitoring of progress and more realistic evaluation of knowledge.

2. Computer Assisted Research (Computer Assisted Research) - used in higher education institutions for theoretical research of literature in various fields and for empirical research using adequate statistical software. The theoretical study of literature today is almost unimaginable without the use of computer technology, since almost all major books, papers, studies and proceedings from professional and scientific conferences are being translated into electronic editions.
3. Distance Learning - is defined as a method of learning that does not require the physical presence of students in a designated classroom location. When it comes to learning, ie. distance education, a variety of terms are used such as: distance learning, digital learning, distance education, e-learning, online education, virtual education and more. Online learning has been a new wave of education for many years now, and because of its benefits, it is becoming increasingly popular around the world. In order to equalize the level of knowledge provided to students, many universities in the world have introduced the practice of exchanging ideas using information and communication technologies. Professors are increasingly giving lectures at their home faculty and this is being transmitted to other sites through the Internet, which significantly reduces material costs.

Today is characterized by the rapid development of science, technology and technology as well as the rapid increase of knowledge. Numerous results of scientific

research are increasingly being applied in production and daily life, which has contributed to scientific and technical progress in the field of education. Today, education is not acquired by obtaining a diploma, but a continuing education is necessary - it is a prerequisite for modern productivity and quality of production, and therefore for national growth, development and competitiveness. Successful development of the information society presupposes an appropriate level of knowledge and skills, both from experts of various professions and from all citizens. The key requirements for the development and application of information and communication technologies in education are (Nešković, Jovanović, 2017):

- establishment of a modern education system that is adapted to the needs of the information society;
- development of digital educational content;
- trainers' training in ICT use;
- raising the level of knowledge and skills for using ICT in the broadest population;
- ability to deploy ICT in as many jobs as possible (as this increases efficiency, improves quality of work and provides better jobs);
- introduction of the modern concept of e-learning and open distance learning;
- development of lifelong learning and learning concepts;
- inclusion of social groups with special educational needs, etc.

The modern organization of teaching today is unthinkable without the introduction of innovation. Information and communication technologies must be an integral part of educational programs, educational programs and teaching processes adapted to the needs of the

information society, and teaching staff and students trained in modern forms of teaching. It is necessary to integrate these technologies into all aspects of the educational process with the aim of a more effective and efficient education. This achieves ICT-related skills that are crucial for the competitiveness of national economies and for increasing opportunities for new jobs and employment. Higher education plays a significant role in integration processes and in fostering economic and social development. Keeping track of global trends and persisting in higher education reform processes are essential, and reforms should be based on advanced technologies, knowledge and skills in various fields. The trend of higher education development and international harmonization of the higher education system exists in all parts of the world.

In order to ensure a sustainable development and a secure future for the Western Balkan countries, in 2000 the European Union Adopt a development strategy known as the Lisbon Strategy with the strategic goals of making the EU the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world by 2010 and capable of delivering sustainable economic growth. A key component of this strategy was the development and advancement of knowledge, which entailed greater investment in education and training, scientific and technological research and innovation. However, some of the strategic goals of the Lisbon Strategy have remained unfulfilled, so the EU has begun the process of creating a new strategic framework that has resulted in the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, which aims at EU-based economic development with environmental protection, high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion. Education is one of the central themes of this strategy and involves the use of alternative instruments and mechanisms in the implementation of EU policies, such as the

Lifelong Learning Program, Tempus, Erasmus Mundus and others. The strategy outlined five goals, two of which relate directly to higher education and research: min. 3% of GDP should be spent on R&D; at least 40% of the younger generation should have a tertiary education or diploma; the proportion of adults (30-34 years of age) with tertiary education should be at least 40%; on average, at least 15% of adults should participate in lifelong learning.

This strategy is not only important for EU Member States, but also represents a significant potential for EU candidate countries to which the Western Balkan countries belong. In the process of global and especially European integration, Serbia, B&H and other countries are making great efforts in adapting higher education to world trends. Most of the activities are directed towards the implementation of all parts of the Bologna process and the achievement of the objectives of the Lisbon Strategy and the Europe 2020 document on higher education. Accordingly, our country has taken part in Tempus, Erasmus Mundus and other EU higher education programs (Neskovic, 2018).

CONCLUSION

Education is the cradle of society and a treasure trove of knowledge, but it should be constantly refined and enriched with new knowledge in accordance with the developmental needs of modern society. Post-modern education means, above all, the modernization of resources and aids in the teaching process in the form of the introduction of new educational technology (computers, video technology, digital education, distance learning, etc.), as well as the enrichment of teaching content, internationalization of knowledge, globalization of the system. education, high specialization of educational profiles, etc.

The changes that bring about the development of information technologies, the ability to use various sources of knowledge that are no longer limited to the book, as well as a new system of communication, bring with them a new atmosphere - teachers are no longer the only sources of knowledge and information, nor is the school the only learning center and development. This situation causes the value system to change and deepen significantly, obliging the teaching staff to constantly improve, keep up with the changes and constantly work on their additional education, in order to guide students in all that will require them in the future society. Today, educational institutions are increasingly expected to provide adequate general education, develop ethical values, form character and instill the key values necessary for further life. These are all values that will, in the future, give young people a better chance of having a successful job and earning money. economic security.

Creating a knowledge society is the primary task of every postmodern society. Formerly knowledge was a privilege and could not be accessed and used by anyone. Today, thanks to the Internet, knowledge is accessible to everyone and traditional teaching is clearly no longer the only way to reach knowledge and skills. Although most people are still skeptical about online training, this mode of education was created precisely to avoid all the disadvantages that traditional education brings with it. Saving time and money, as well as the availability of educational programs for everyone at any time, no matter where they are, are just some of the reasons why more and more people are learning by using their computer. In modern education there is a wide variety of knowledge sources, which increases the quantity of knowledge, advances the digital economy, and the use of educational technology improves the quality of knowledge. That is why today it is

necessary to make the most of modern educational technology.

The time we are in is a time of great change where technology is advancing daily in all areas of life. Accordingly, the field of educational technology is advancing. First of all, education itself is becoming more needed than ever. Introducing innovation into the educational process is a reaction to traditional teaching in which the frontal form of work with a pronounced teaching function of teachers is dominant. This kind of teaching is often formalized, verbalized, and blatantly obvious, which diminishes the permanence of knowledge and the ability to relate theory to real life. Also, this form of teaching does not provide sufficient interaction between lecturers and students, nor does it leave enough time for independent activities of students in the function of better mastering the teaching contents. The solution to these problems is the implementation of information and communication technologies in the education system and the provision of new communication opportunities.

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