

András Benedek

New Vistas of Learning in the Mobile Age

Based on research analyzing links between mobile communication and cognitive development, this paper examines, employing a pedagogical approach, learning issues which are related to the spread of new technologies emerging in mobile communication. The discussion undertaken from this perspective aims to formulate the statement, implied by the influence which the means of mobile communication exert on informal and non-formal learning, that real-time learning and present-awareness considerably transform the individual's learning potential through the application of such means. The new apparatus of mobile communication and the "space" it generates help *movement* and *communication* create basic conditions for knowledge acquisition and the development of social relations.

One of the important reasons for the differentiation of learning activities, which has particularly accelerated, is the gradual – both methodological and infrastructural – transformation of traditional school-based education. For the part of the population which is "mobile", in terms of both physical movement and the use of communication devices, these activities have changed mainly with respect to technical means and various stages of life, assuming an informal character. The author argues that today a progressive model is one which maintains learning activity at a relatively high level throughout the succession of life stages, offering opportunities to act (such as training programs, information interfaces and access) with proper devices and current content. A significant point in value choice is the growing popularity of the life-long learning approach, which can be witnessed within the European Union, as well as in all developed countries. This approach is closely related to the notions of knowledge society and knowledge-based economy, which are, on the one hand, pragmatic and, on the other hand, free of conservative ideologies.

The demand for a new kind of literacy points to our limits and potentials at the same time. School-based learning is greatly influenced by the fact that the development of reading skills is essentially linked to content, while it becomes less and less restricted to text interpretation and the development of the ability of abstract thinking. The new forms of transferring visual and textual information which mobile communication provides can significantly enhance the efficiency of communication: the quantity of information which can be transmitted and understood in a unit of time. Knowledge shaped by mobile communication is also more individualized than knowledge gained at school because its actual content presupposes the infrastructure of socially relevant cognitive achievements. Although it generates a new kind of dependency and complex risk, their existence should not justify the "future shock" pessimism about this process.