In this paper the concept of learning and lifelong learning, lifelong learning skills, the relationship between lifelong learning and creativity are discussed.

Learning is not limited to only school study because it is a fundamental process in a human being’s journey to fulfill his/her capacity towards existing continually. Learning is composed of the individual's life experiences. Learning is a lifelong process beginning with birth, and it also prepares the individual for life.

Lifelong learning provides the skills which an individual has to learn in order to know how to learn. Also, these skills are necessary for an individual during his or her entire life. Lifelong learners have a desire to understand their capabilities, to progress in self-actualization, to find out new things, to explain facts, to guess possible situations, to draw conclusions, and so on. One of the aims of lifelong learning is to make an individual a successful learner. Lifelong learning helps individuals to adapt in a changing world, in changing job conditions, to his/her social environment, to technological developments, and also, prepares the individual for the future. This paper emphasizes the importance of the lifelong learning process on human development.

INTRODUCTION

Learning is one of the most important subjects for everyone beginning from birth. It is also seen as a necessary process throughout lifetimes. It is difficult to define the concept of learning. Learning can be described simply as a mental activity that includes receiving, storing, retrieving and using knowledge (Lewis, 1998). The concept of learning refers to gaining knowledge, changes in behavior, performance and experience. According to Kimble (Hergenhahn, 1988: p. 2) “learning is a relatively permanent change in behavioral potentiality that occurs as a result of reinforced practice”. Bower and Hilgard (1981: p. 11) asserted that

learning refers to the change in a subject’s behavior or behavior potential to a given situation brought about by the subject's repeated experiences in that situation, provided that the behavior change cannot be explained on the basis of the subject’s native response tendencies, maturation, or temporary states (such as fatigue, drunkenness, drives, and so on).
Abbott (Watkins, 2000: p. 91) asserted that, learning is “a reflective activity which enables the learner to draw upon previous experience to understand and evaluate the present, so as to shape future action and formulate new knowledge”. Learning experience has three dimensions. These are past experience, present experience and future experience. Past experiences comes from matured human experiences; present experiences occur as a result of his or her own action; and future experiences result from his or her own perception and imagination of a perception about life and it is mostly related to creativity.

Learning includes both incidental and intentional learning experience. Formal learning is based on intentional learning which occurs when structured or programmed learning activity takes place. Formal learning also includes incidental learning which consists of both programmed and independent learning activity.

Cropley and Dave (1978) pointed out that the pre-requisites for learning are educability, motives, values and attitudes for lifelong learning. Educability involves the appropriate learning skills needed to learn how to learn, self-directed learning and self-learning. In addition, capability of learning needs appropriate levels of motivation helping learners to access knowledge, to improve their learning skills and to improve their capacity of life. Learners of all ages need to be more motivated to develop competence of learning and to solve problems that will be devoted to learning. As for the National Research Council (2000: p. 77) “learners are motivated to spend the time needed to learn complex subjects and to solve problem that they find interesting”.

As for Peters (2001: p. 98), “learning is not bound to defined life-cycle, nor to defined locations and times and anywhere”. Learning is a continuous process and it can be accomplished in different ways. The learning process requires interest and active involvement of the learner. The involvement of learning experience leads the individual to be active in a learning situation and helps the individual to organize learning experience that activates the interest for learning.

Learning theorists, namely Hilgard, Skinner, Cronbach, Piaget, Pavlov, Thorndike, Harris, Schwahn, Burner, Maslow, Tolman, Gagne, Bloom, Dewey, Mager, Ausabel, Bandura, Walters and so on try to explain learning and the learning process according to their points of view. One group of these theorists sees learning as a process by which behavior is changed. Another group defines learning in terms of growth, development of competences and fulfillment of potential. A third group of these theorists emphasizes growth, with its focus on cognitive development.