Chapter 3
A Model for Teacher Training to Improve Students' 21st Century Skills in Online and Blended Learning:
An Approach from Film Education

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ABSTRACT

This chapter presents and develops a model of teacher training considering six socio-technical areas that are currently affecting the K-12 educational environment in both face-to-face, blended and online learning: 1) development of 21st century skills; 2) conducting social innovations; 3) appropriate knowledge management among educators; 4) a renovation of classrooms in pursuit of creative classrooms; 5) effective educational practices; and 6) all these issues under a formal educational context that has its own standard and curricular rules. In this context, a literature review on skills needed in the knowledge based society has been realized together with an analysis of possible film education scenarios for media and web-enhanced classrooms, and an exploratory qualitative research about actual ICT activities at school and their outcomes. The entire research regards teachers' lifelong learning with the aim to acquire regularly new competencies. These new abilities enable them to face new professional challenges.

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INTRODUCTION

Media Content and Education

Over recent decades, the breakthrough experienced by Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) has facilitated the increased use of mobile phones, laptops, and tablets as everyday elements in the lives of citizens. This fact, coupled with the capabilities of Internet connectivity and mobile apps development, which enables the exchange of digital content between Internet users, has exponentially increased access to media content by the population.

The implications of this reality on different social agents are numerous and can be evaluated positively or negatively, according to different parameters of analysis. Specifically, their implications for the educational context are important and relevant (Blurton, 1999), since all features and functionality of these new ICT (such as integration of media content, interactivity, flexibility of use, and connectivity) greatly influence their actors (students, teachers, parents, educational organizations, etc.) and their areas of interactions (formal, informal and non-formal legislation, labour market, etc.).

Thus, two facts appear in our society: citizens are in contact with media content in a constant, daily mode and as such, citizens need to acquire skills for a proper and optimal use of these media. This ensures for optimal knowledge and information management in various areas of life, such as individual interests and hobbies, family relationships, work environment, social relationships, friendships or active citizenship.

Faced with this reality, the increasing use of media content by citizens and the need for students to acquire new skills, various international organizations and institutions in the educational sector reacted by supporting the development of many research initiatives. The aim of this research was to establish improvements in incorporating new skills for the correct and critical media content use by children and adolescents. For example, UNESCO, which since the 1960s takes into account the critical role of media content and its social importance, has developed several projects to promote the use of media content at the school level and its incorporation into school curriculum. Thus, the report on *Media Education. A Kit for Teachers, Students, Parents and Professionals* (Frau-Meigs, 2006) proposes both aspects: i) curriculums, defining their objectives, elements and timing; and ii) a strategy for their implementation in different environments. In addition, it proposes both handbooks for those involved in the formal education system (teachers, students, parents, and professionals) and examples of good practices in media literacy.

In this sense, after developing several projects on ICT in Education (Meleisea, 2007), in 2009 a mapping of different policies, visions, programmes, and global challenges in media literacy was also carried out (Frau-Meigs & Torrent, 2009), establishing various approaches in relation to its definition, capabilities, and actors. Furthermore, in 2011, UNESCO published the report *Media and Information Literacy. Curriculum for Teachers* (Wilson et al., 2011), which explicitly states educational curricular aspects, its framework, the key skills of teachers, and also distinguishing between core and non-core modules, all from the integrative approach between media and information literacy.

In addition, the European Commission has also contributed to study issues related to the use and exploitation of the media in schools. *Literacy Screening* research, carried out by the consortium of the British Film Institute, the London University Institute of Education, and the industry body Film Education, developed a research of the situation of film literacy within Europe, and proposed a total of 14 recommendations (Burn & Reid, 2012; Reia-Baptista, Burn, Reid, & Cannon, 2014). Furthermore, a consortium of seven partners coordinated by Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB) developed the *European Media Literacy Education Study* during the years 2012-2014, conducting an analysis of