Chapter 6
The Sky Is the Limit!

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ABSTRACT

Technology and particularly Cloud technology can definitely prove to be a powerful tool in linking the physical to the virtual world by allowing an escape and freedom from the two-dimensional world of paper-based teaching and learning. Balance is therefore achieved while educators and students access and create digital information on top of the physical world. Technology is everybody’s favorite thus educators should definitely consider integrating them in their teaching in order to increase motivation. In the era of technology, access to on-line information is at the end of learners’ and educators’ fingertips. Simple but appealing electronic tools like mind maps, blogs, online quizzes or games, QR codes, digital educational platforms and infographics can boost inspiration, promote collaborative learning and make engagement more effective. This chapter will provide a theoretical background and showcase projects that exemplify the aspects highlighted here, each one from a different perspective.

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INTRODUCTION

At the dawn of the 21st century, the need to move systematically towards a knowledge-based society was identified as a dynamic response to globalization. According to the IGI Global Dictionary (2016) “A knowledge-based society refers to the type of society that is needed to compete and succeed in the changing economic and political dynamics of the modern world. It refers to societies that are “well educated, and who, therefore, rely on the knowledge of their citizens to drive the innovation, entrepreneurship and dynamism of that society’s economy.” In order for this transformation to become effective and impactful, the need for the development of a framework of basic skills for personal, social and professional development was identified. This framework would function both as a measure of proficiency in four distinct areas of personal achievement and growth, active citizenship, social inclusion and employment, all areas pertinent to European citizens. In addition, this framework would function as a tool for setting goals for continuous personal development and lifelong learning.

Such a tool was developed in 2006 and was outlined in the “European Reference Framework on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning”. It identified eight key competences essential for personal achievement and growth, active citizenship, social inclusion and employment. More specifically, the framework defined competences as “a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to the context. Key competences are those which all individuals need for personal fulfilment and development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employment”. (European Commission, 2006).

In particular, these competences were: communication in a mother tongue, communication in a foreign language, digital competence, mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology, learning to learn, social and civic competences, sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, and cultural awareness and expression.

In the process, the same recommendation developed a definition of two fundamental terms: competences and key competences. The former was defined as a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes; the latter was defined as the specific competences that all individuals need to perform in order to progress within the context of society, citizenship and employment. Furthermore, a set of four competences were considered critical for their direct impact on learning. These were: language, literacy, numeracy and information and communication technologies.

Information and communication technologies are of particular interest in this chapter since they lead to the emergence of a new competence, i.e., Digital Competence, as well as a new set of processes required to help individuals manage, benefit from and personalize the chaotic information and content available, i.e., Personal Knowledge Management.

APPLYING DIGITAL COMPETENCE AND PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT PROCESSES

Digital Competence and Personal Knowledge Management are interlinked and feed into and from each other. Before any examination of how they influence the pedagogical landscape, we need to analyze their nature, their components and their implications.
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