Chapter 3
Curriculum and Training Model Proposal for Infocomunicational Competences Acquisition in Prison: A Case Study in Two Portuguese Prisons

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ABSTRACT

ICT have an important role in various areas of Portuguese society. Social reintegration is a key theme in the Portuguese penal system and its legislation. This dichotomy led to question if the existence of internet access in the school prison has been a reintegration key point. Literature reveals that education is a pivotal factor in the preparation of the inmate to reintegrate society and in the prevention and reduction of recidivism. The present schooling guidelines reinforce the importance of technology base knowledge in the curriculum of any individual. Thus, the acquisition of such competences is of extreme importance, and cannot be ignored in the education that is offered to all those that sit in the margin of society. Two case studies consisting in the implementation of short courses on infocomunicational skills in two prisons allowed to explore the relation between the concepts inmate, internet, and education. The results contribute with a proposal of a curriculum and training model on infocomunicational competences acquisition to apply in prison context.

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INTRODUCTION

In the current Portuguese social context in which new technologies, and especially the Internet, have played an indispensable role in the daily lives of individuals and in human relations, and in which post-seclusion social reintegration is a key issue in legislation concerning the Portuguese Prison System, the availability of Internet access emerges as a potential factor for the rehabilitation and social reintegration of prisoners. The existing literature reveals that re-education is a determining factor in the process of preparing the prisoner for a return to the “free society” and reducing post-seclusion criminal recidivism. Considering that current education cannot ignore (and doesn’t ignore) the need to include technology in the individual’s personal and professional life, the learning of technological tools should not be censored in the more specific teaching contexts of society.

In a country and a world in which the Internet and Information and Communication Technologies are considered crucial instruments for the integration of citizens and the development of a functional and competitive knowledge society, it cannot be ignored that in Portugal there are more than fourteen thousand individuals in detention, and that more than half of the prison population does not have compulsory education completed. In fact, 58.4% of the population is distributed between the level of education equivalent to the 2nd cycle of basic education (6th year) or below it (Figure 1) - Literary Qualifications of the Recluse Population by Gender and Nationality (2nd quarter of 2016), and of these, 3.4% do not know how to read or write and the rest of them can only read and write. These values are dramatic and confirm the weight of education in the course of individuals. If the period of imprisonment is not channeled to change this reality, if the inmate population is not allowed to improve their educational qualifications and if it is not done in a comprehensive way, including all educational aspects, these individuals will have zero infocommunication literacy, distorted and/or basic to survive in the contemporary world when the respective periods of imprisonment end.

It is in this context marked by the digital exclusion that the proposal of a training model in the area of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in network, directed to the reclusive population, is presented, making possible the acquisition of infocommunicational competences that are considered elements of socio-professional integration in the post-seclusion period. In this sense, we try to understand the possibility of using the Internet, in the teaching-learning context of the Portuguese Prison Institutions.

This chapter presents the training model for the acquisition and/or development of infocommunicational skills (operational/instrumental, information, communication and security) by individuals. This model includes several strands that are operationalized in a training program: curriculum, objectives and competencies to be
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