

## Chapter 12

# Digital Literacy as Part of a New Curriculum for the Netherlands

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### **ABSTRACT**

*In November 2014, the State Secretary for Education, Culture, and Science of the Netherlands officially launched an online country-wide consultation about the future of Dutch education. Based on the outcomes and the ongoing debate, the Netherlands started the development of a new curriculum framework for primary and secondary education in 2018. One of the new themes in this curriculum is digital literacy, which is defined as a combination of ICT skills, media literacy, information literacy, and computational thinking. Together with other subjects such as languages and mathematics, digital literacy will be part of the design of the new curriculum. A teacher design team for digital literacy developed a vision and elaborated this in eight big ideas. Based on the big ideas learning trajectories were designed. These learning trajectories describe what students should learn in primary and secondary education. Schools were involved in the design process from the start. It is expected that the mandatory curriculum framework will be implemented in the year 2022.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Even though “information science” and “informatics” was part of the national curriculum in the Netherlands in the 1980s/90s, this was a) particularly the case in secondary education and b) primarily focused on understanding and be able to work with computers and programming. These subjects eventually proved very difficult to implement and they disappeared in 2000 from the curriculum (Voogt & ten Brummelhuis, 2014). The discussion about Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in education gradually changed from learning about ICT to using ICT for learning and more and more attention was paid to the integration of ICT in education as a “tool” for teachers. Yet, about 10 years later, the discussion on learning about ICT started again, among others because of a report of the Royal Netherlands Academy

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-9261-7.ch012

of Arts and Sciences (KNAW, 2012). In this report to the Academy stated that the increasing digitization of information and communication in society requires new skills that should get more attention, but that these skills (Digital Literacy) are not getting sufficient attention in education. Other discussion topics such as 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, equity, and the perceived overload of the current curriculum led to a broad national discussion about the future of education in the Netherlands. In this chapter we will describe this discussion and the way Digital Literacy will become part of a new designed curriculum.

## Digital Literacy

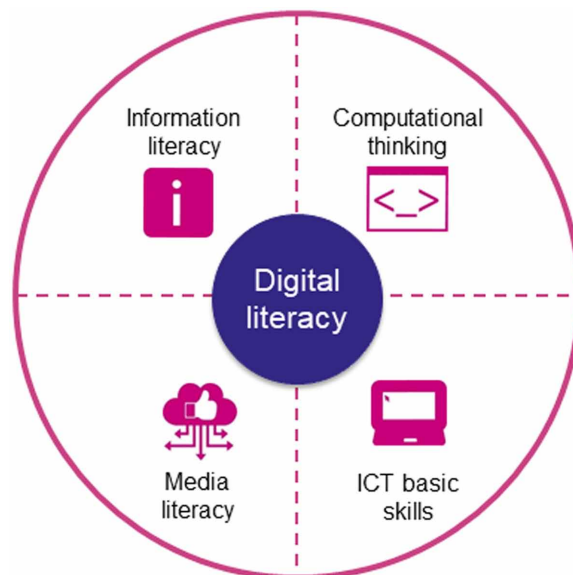
To gain a better understanding of the skills that are considered important for the future, a literature study was carried out to establish a conceptual framework with explicit attention for Digital Literacy (Thijs, Fisser & van der Hoeven, 2014; Fisser & Thijs, 2015). This involved an exploration of recent literature, both nationally and internationally, on the basis of keywords such 21st century skills, advanced skills, digital literacy, information literacy, and media literacy. Experts in the field of 21st century skills were consulted in relation to the outcomes of this study and the results were also discussed with teachers, administrators, and policy makers.

From this study, Digital Literacy was defined as a skill that relates to using ICT effectively, efficiently and responsibly. It involves a combination of ICT (basic) skills, computational thinking, media literacy and information literacy, as shown in Figure 1:

The four components were described as follows:

- ICT (basic) skills includes the knowledge of basic concepts and functions of computers, the ability to identify, connect and operate hardware, the ability to deal with standard office applications (word processors, spreadsheets and presentation software), the ability to deal with software pro-

*Figure 1. The four components of digital literacy*



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