



Case studies

G. Pascoli, D.D. Genzano, I circolo, Rome, Italy

Reporters: Alessandra Missana and Marilena Nalesso – March 2009



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This is one of 25 case studies produced for STEPS, the Study of the impact of technology in primary schools, to illustrate the impact of ICT, on schools, teachers and learners, and to highlight barriers and enablers to its effective use in the school. Further information can be found at <http://steps.eun.org>.



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1. CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

Genzano primary school is situated in a small urban centre of approximately 30,000 inhabitants, in a hilly area on the outskirts of Rome. There are 520 pupils. Owing to the increasing flow of migrants, especially from Romania, the school has a strong focus on integration thanks to specific initiatives aimed at promoting personal and educational growth as active and responsible citizens.



The school is very active in the community, and co-operates with social and educational institutions and associations in the area. It also participates in local, national and European projects, such as e-Twinning and Comenius.

The school website is highly valued, providing a good opportunity to publicise school activities and increase communication between the various stakeholders.

The use of ICT in school planning and in supporting didactic paths in different languages adds value to the schools' educational and social mission.

2. EXAMPLE OF PRACTICE

A WebTwinning project with a school in Bucharest aimed to develop the cohesion of the class by fully integrating Romanian pupils into the school, and by making Italian pupils more aware of different cultures in other countries. A practical result of the project was the creation of a multilingual website in Italian, Romanian and English.

Pupils played an active role, researching internet-based resources and using digital cameras to present various cultural and environmental aspects of their own countries, highlighting differences and similarities.



Pupils learnt how to use software such as NotePad, Word and Paint to write text and create pictures, and used PowerPoint to present their ideas to their Romanian peers. Language was a particular focus of the project: English was used as the main communication language, but Romanian and Italian were also used to encourage learners to reflect on the similarities between the two languages.

3. IMPACT, BARRIERS AND ENABLERS

3.1 SCHOOL

ICT DEVELOPMENT PLAN, IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY, ORGANISATIONAL CHANGES AND ATTITUDES

○ **Impacts and enablers**

- The Primary School Reform of 2000 was a key national policy driver to support the use of ICT.
- Pedagogical support is still offered by RAI Educational (www.educational.rai.it/).
- ICT plays an important role in the POF (School Educational Plan) and facilitates communication within and outside the school.
- There is frequent contact with parents to share information on school projects, forms, and news about meetings and social events.
- The headteacher and teaching staff are highly motivated in making priority use of ICT, seeing it as an important tool to communicate within and outside the school in support of educational and social functions, and as a pedagogical tool for class innovation.

RESOURCING

○ **Impacts, barriers and enablers**

- National funding has allowed the school to create a multimedia lab, containing an independent server, video projector, and large monitor to allow pupils to see what is happening on the teacher's PC. This funding also allowed the purchase of a few, specific software resources.
- Funding is mainly provided at a local level to provide internet connectivity, but it is sometimes possible to access grants for specific projects also. A difficulty exists in that there is not always synergy between national and local authorities regarding priorities for ICT.
- Participation in local projects, such as environmental and citizenship projects, provides an important source of funding to support ICT.
- The ultimate aim is to have a computer in each classroom.

THE CURRICULUM AND ICT

- **Impacts, barriers and enablers**
 - ICT is a compulsory subject from the very first year of primary school, but teachers are free to decide on the number of hours it is taught each week, and its applications.
 - ICT is mainly used in a cross-curricular way to provide both pedagogical and technical support to other subjects.
 - There are good examples of interest and work with ICT in the school: besides WebTwinning and the Comenius projects, each class uses ICT to plan activities and create multimedia products.

ASSESSMENT OF ICT AND ICT FOR ASSESSMENT

- **Impacts and enablers**
 - A questionnaire is issued to all teachers each year to assess achievement of general goals, positive aspects and difficulties in the use of ICT.
 - ICT is a useful tool in assessing school planning of activities.
- **Barriers**
 - No evidence at national education system level.

ORGANISATION OF SUPPORT

- **Impacts, barriers and enablers**
 - At a national level, in-service teacher training courses (such as For Tic, Agenzia Scuola and ex-Indire) provide specific, blended courses for future tutors.
 - A teacher from the school acts as the webmaster, is responsible for co-ordinating the School Educational Plan, and provides support to colleagues to allow them to upload pupils' work to the website. Another teacher is responsible for co-ordinating ICT activities and providing technical support and training to other teachers (approximately 70 per cent of the school).
 - Games and didactic activities, for all subjects and at different levels of difficulty, are stored on each computer in the lab and in the classrooms for teachers to choose and work with.
 - External suppliers are responsible for the maintenance of the web portal and repairs to technical equipment. However, there is a noticeable absence of technical support to help teachers overcome day-to-day problems.

3.2 TEACHERS

ICT AS A TOOL FOR COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION

- **Impacts and enablers**
 - There are increased opportunities for communication using ICT: teachers can exchange ideas and materials more easily, and direct communication can be made between school and families.
 - ICT provides opportunities for networking with other schools at both regional and national level.
 - ICT is a co-operative tool.

ICT AS A TOOL TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY AND EFFICIENCY OF PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION

- **Impacts**
 - Class work is highly facilitated by ICT.
 - There is positive use of ICT in planning didactic paths.
 - Contact with families has been greatly improved.

THE PEDAGOGICAL ROLE OF ICT TO IMPROVE LEARNING AND TEACHING

- **Impacts**
 - ICT helps to enhance the learning process: it stimulates creativity, the pleasure of discovery, and learning by 'trying and doing'.

ICT SKILLS

- **Impacts and enablers**
 - Teachers have acquired new professional skills thanks to higher methodological and technological competences.

PARTICIPATION, MOTIVATION, CONFIDENCE AND PERFORMANCE

- **Impacts, barriers and enablers**
 - Teachers' motivation and awareness of the usefulness of ICT to support their pedagogy support is increasing: "the more technological opportunities are offered, the more interest is aroused".

- Teachers' competence in using ICT is improving, although there is still a need for more training.

3.3 LEARNERS

ICT SKILLS

- **Impacts and enablers**

- There have been improvements in pupils' skills, especially in creative writing, English and maths.
- There has been creative use of specific software such as Word, Paint, Excel and PowerPoint.
- Pupils have learnt html skills, allowing them to personally contribute to the creation of a shared website with a Romanian school.



- Critical and research skills have developed, as have interpersonal and intercultural relationships.

MOTIVATION, PARTICIPATION AND CONFIDENCE

- **Impacts and enablers**

- Motivation and enthusiasm are very high in pupils. Their digital competence, along with the support they receive from their teachers, results in successful performance.
- Learners find ICT interesting and useful. They enjoy 'discovering new things', 'learning by playing', 'using the internet for research', and 'making contact with distant learners to exchange emails, pictures and games'.

4. REFERENCES

- **Sources:**

- Interviews with the headteacher and teachers, and observation of lessons.

- **Further information:**

- School website (<http://genzanoprimo.altervista.org>).
- WebTwinning project website (<http://webtwinning.altervista.org/index.htm>).