



Case studies

18. Scoala No. 1 Gagesti, Bolotesti, Romania

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CONTENTS

1. Context of the school	3
2. Example of practice	3
3. Impact, barriers and enablers	3
3.1 School.....	3
ICT development plan, implementation strategy, organisational changes and attitudes	3
Resourcing.....	4
The curriculum and ICT	4
Assessment of ICT and ICT for assessment	5
Organisation of support.....	5
3.2 Teachers	5
ICT as a tool for communication and collaboration	5
ICT as a tool to improve the quality and efficiency of planning and administration	5
The pedagogical role of ICT to improve learning and teaching.....	6
ICT skills	6
Participation, motivation, confidence and performance.....	6
3.3 Learners.....	6
ICT skills	6
Motivation, participation and confidence	7
Participation in all aspects of school life: academic, social, personal.....	7
4. References	7
5. Annex	7

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

The school is 130 years old and was formed by a famous Romanian educationalist and theorist, Spiru Haret¹. Located 25 km from Focsani, the city capital of the Vrancea County, the village is part of a group of villages with the administration in Bolotesti, which is famous for vegetables and wine.

The school comprises a primary section, a lower secondary section and a vocational training school. About 200 pupils attend this school. The headteacher co-ordinates all the schools belonging to Bolotesti.



Staffing in the primary and lower secondary school consists of 17 teachers, 5 of which teach in primary. Four teachers in primary and five teachers in lower secondary use ICT in teaching and learning on a weekly basis. The headteacher is an advocate of ICT, and introduced the former HC² (the first computers in Romanian schools) in the 1980s.

2. EXAMPLE OF PRACTICE

A mathematics lesson was observed where presentation software and an interactive whiteboard (IWB) were used.

3. IMPACT, BARRIERS AND ENABLERS

3.1 SCHOOL

ICT DEVELOPMENT PLAN, IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY, ORGANISATIONAL CHANGES AND ATTITUDES

- **Barriers and enablers**
 - In terms of computer basics, the Ministry of Education has approved a school book which is mainly used by newly qualified teachers. The book provides

¹ Spiru Haret: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiru_Haret

² HC is a sort of ancient keyboard connected to a monitor that handles QBasic; an IDE and interpreter for a variant of the BASIC programming language based on QuickBasic.

guidance on how to introduce basic applications such as Word and Paint into the classroom.

- In primary schools in Romania, the Ministry of Education allows two hours each week for optional subjects, giving teachers the flexibility to use ICT in various subjects. This occurs at Grades 3 and 4 only (where pupils are 8-10 years old).

RESOURCING

○ Impacts, barriers and enablers

- The school benefited from a national programme from the Ministry of Education called SEI4. The programme aimed to equip both lower and upper secondary schools in Romania with a lab of 10 computers and a server. The server hosts the educational package AEL. A further five computers were provided by the Educational Department of Vrancea County.



- Some of the students attending the school benefited from another national programme where the Romanian government encouraged students to purchase a computer for personal use. Those involved in the scheme received a contribution of €200 towards the purchase of a computer.
- 5 of the 22 pupils in the observed class own a computer at home.
- There is a reliable internet connection at the school, but broadband is not yet available.

THE CURRICULUM AND ICT

○ Impacts, barriers and enablers

- There is no national curriculum for ICT at primary level in schools. The Ministry of Education and the Educational Department of Vrancea County (Inspectorate) recommend that teachers who are interested in integrating ICT into their daily teaching activities develop their own curriculum, which is then submitted for approval. Such curriculum proposals, which meet certain criteria for originality and relevance, are then shared with other potential teachers during conferences and local seminars.



ASSESSMENT OF ICT AND ICT FOR ASSESSMENT

- **Barriers**
 - Teachers and pupils expect more support from national and local educational authorities in terms of curriculum content and hardware.

ORGANISATION OF SUPPORT

- **Impacts and enablers**
 - Motivation is the main driver of the use of ICT in primary schools.
 - The reputation of the school has increased significantly since certain teachers began using ICT in teaching. This creates a constant pressure for other schools in the neighbourhood.
 - Teachers who implement and run special activities with pupils receive a financial bonus.
- **Barriers**
 - There is no specific member of staff assigned to provide technical assistance and maintenance to the computer labs. The headteacher often asks for support from friends, pupils' parents or gets directly involved in this activity.



3.2 TEACHERS

ICT AS A TOOL FOR COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION

- **Impacts, barriers and enablers**
 - Pupils are familiar with the communication tools that a computer offers. Pupils communicate via email or MSN Messenger with friends and family. The school is not involved with collaborative projects outside its local setting.

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

- **Impacts and enablers**
 - The school administration uses computers to handle electronic records. Training was delivered by the local educational authorities (Inspectorate).
 - Teachers use a dedicated website for inspiration and support.

THE PEDAGOGICAL ROLE OF ICT TO IMPROVE LEARNING AND TEACHING

- **Impacts, barriers and enablers**

- Even though some pupils own computers at home, they ask their teachers for support and advice on a daily basis.
- There is a permanent dialogue between teachers and pupils on various issues pupils encounter at home. Very often, pupils play a role in training their parents to use the computer.
- The positive attitude of both teachers and pupils generates and increases motivation, which is a key factor in achieving good results at school.
- Lessons are often implemented on the basis of educational games. An observed lesson focused on revising maths terminology using a game. This approach, which combines traditional and modern teaching strategies, brings some extra elements in a rural school where using technologies is an event.

ICT SKILLS

- **Impacts**

- Pupils are able to perform basic operations with presentation software and a word processor.

PARTICIPATION, MOTIVATION, CONFIDENCE AND PERFORMANCE

- **Impacts and enablers**

- An interactive whiteboard makes learning and teaching more attractive as pupils need to focus on following certain instructions and use on-screen menus to organise information. A beamer helps share the content which is discussed and then approved by the entire class. Working in teams also increases the feeling of participation.

3.3 LEARNERS

ICT SKILLS

- **Impacts**

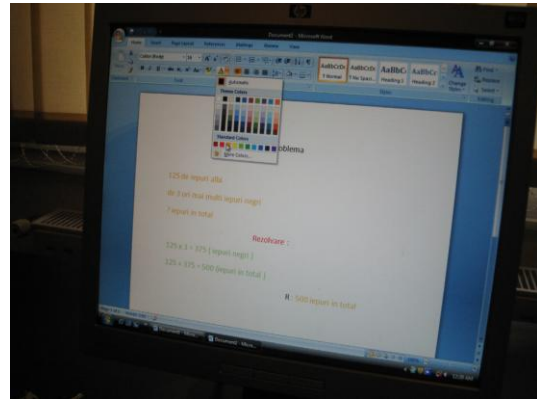
- Pupils are very familiar with basic Windows applications. They still look for the right keys on a keyboard, but this is normal at this age. Pupils are able to focus on both their own screen and the big screen in the classroom. They are able to select the needed information which helps to complete a task on time.

MOTIVATION, PARTICIPATION AND CONFIDENCE

- **Impacts, barriers and enablers**
 - Staff have some awareness of the use of appropriate content.
 - Pupils in Grades 7 and 9 learn programming languages grade which minimises the use of the computer as a support tool for other subjects.

PARTICIPATION IN ALL ASPECTS OF SCHOOL LIFE: ACADEMIC, SOCIAL, PERSONAL

- **Impacts and enablers**
 - Pupils are excited to use computers at school, stating that they prefer using ICT to books. Computer games are a favourite activity at home.
 - Pupils are able to communicate and surf the internet outside school settings. MSN Messenger is the favourite tool of communication, which is probably associated to the use of mobile phones.
- **Barriers**
 - Internet access in school is not controlled and monitored in terms of e-safety issues.



4. REFERENCES

- **Sources:**
 - Interviews with teachers and observation of lessons.
- **Further information:**
 - Teachers' support website (www.didactic.ro).

5. ANNEX

- Curriculum proposal in primary schools in Romania
- ICT in primary, a school book approved by the Ministry of Education in Romania