Case studies

8. Ecole des Amandiers, Paris, France

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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.

steps

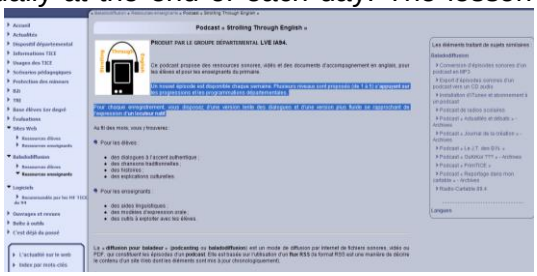
This study has been commissioned by the European Commission, Directorate General Education and Culture.

1. CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

The Ecole des Amandiers is in a relatively socially disadvantaged part of Paris (a priority education zone - ZEP), to the east of the city centre. There are 180 pupils grouped in eight classes.

2. EXAMPLE OF PRACTICE

The main characteristic of the school is its extensive use of interactive whiteboards (IWBs). A class of CM2 pupils (aged 10-11) was observed.



There are English lessons of 20 to 30 minutes, usually at the end of each day. The lesson observed was very lively: the teacher used a range of teaching aids, the children were highly motivated, and English was used throughout. The theme of the lesson was food, using vocabulary introduced in a previous lesson. The teacher first played a podcast, *Strolling through English*, freely available from the regional educational support centre. A new episode is uploaded each week, with five different levels of difficulty. Each recording is also available at slow or native speaker speed.

The pupils know the dialogue by heart and practise saying if they like or dislike different foods, with pictures of food displayed on the interactive whiteboard as prompts. Using the IWB pupils choose an item of food and ask others if they like it. Then pupils work in pairs, the teacher names the food, for example bread, and pupils ask each other if they like it or not. Pupils sit at tables of four, two on each side, making pair work easy to organise. Pupils were motivated and performed well. Two columns are displayed on the IWB, headed ‘like’ and ‘don’t like’. A pupil working at the board moves images to the correct column, depending on the answers given. New vocabulary was then introduced using a new set of photographs, with the teacher insisting on class repetition to get the pronunciation right.

Later on, the teacher shows a video digitised from an old resource that is no longer available. In the video animals ask for food. Pupils re-use the structure ‘Can I have a/some...?’ making sentences using pictures displayed on the interactive whiteboard.

In another exercise, one pupil is at the interactive whiteboard, which is displaying various pictures of food and a little girl. The teacher says “Can I have an apple and some milk please?” and the pupil moves the pictures to the little girl. Other pupils come up and do the same, one asking, the other moving the pictures. Every pupil wants to take part.

The final exercise is to work on a new structure: ‘My favourite food is …’. Pupils are asked the question then work in pairs using a prompt sheet with images of food.

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In just 30 minutes every pupil actively took in the lesson and spoke English; there was no writing. When pupils made a mistake it was usually others who corrected them, not the teacher.

3. IMPACT, BARRIERS AND ENABLERS

3.1 SCHOOL

ICT DEVELOPMENT PLAN, IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY, ORGANISATIONAL CHANGES AND ATTITUDES

- **Barriers**
  - Little quantitative evaluation takes place, but the teacher interviewed said that it would be interesting to set up a working group around this question at school.
  - While the ICT competences of those teachers using ICT are exploited, ICT remains optional for some.

RESOURCING

- **Impacts**
  - Video-conferencing equipment has been installed (including a Polycom camera and loudspeakers) because the school is participating in the video-conferencing for primary languages project '1,000 visioconférences pour l'enseignement des langues au primaire'.
  - There is a computer classroom with 12 computers, two interactive whiteboards and computer, tablet PC and handheld learner response systems (one for every four pupils).
- **Barriers**
  - There have been problems in finding a video-conferencing partner school. The school has just found a partner, but it is in France (Collège du Ponant, île de Batz, Brittany).
  - When the interactive whiteboard was first installed the teacher was given just one hour of training in its use. Everything else has been self-taught.
  - The handheld voting system is underused at present. The teacher would like to use it when pupils are working in groups (for example, to allow them to agree on an answer and submit it), but some pupils still see it as a game.

- **Enablers**
  - The regional authority (‘rectorat’) purchased the equipment, including the interactive whiteboard.
  - Interactive whiteboards are located in classrooms and the computer classroom.

THE CURRICULUM AND ICT

- **Impacts**
  - Two teachers use the interactive whiteboard: the teacher observed, who uses ICT across all curriculum areas, and a first year teacher (also a teacher adviser), who is using it to increase reading skills development.
- **Barriers**
  - Although ICT is integrated in the curriculum by two teachers, others see it is a ‘bolt on’ to their existing practice.
  - Other teachers do not use the interactive whiteboard. They send half the class to the computer classroom to ‘do ICT’, but it is not integrated into subject learning.

ASSESSMENT OF ICT AND ICT FOR ASSESSMENT

- **Barriers**
  - ICT is not used for any type of assessment.

3.2 TEACHERS

ICT AS A TOOL FOR COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION

- **Barriers**
  - ICT is not yet used to communicate with the local community or other schools.

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

- **Enablers**
  - Despite the low spread of ICT in teaching, all administrative tasks are computerised in the school.

THE PEDAGOGICAL ROLE OF ICT TO IMPROVE LEARNING AND TEACHING

- **Enablers**
  - Teachers use free online learning resources provided by the local authority.
  - ICT can increase authenticity of activities, interactivity and remediation.

ICT SKILLS

- **Barriers**
  - It is typical for teachers to send half their class to the computer room with a classroom assistant who helps them produce word-processed texts, but they do not go there themselves.
  - Some teachers use ICT as an add-on without developing pedagogical strategies for its use.
- **Enablers**
  - Some teachers have only just begun to develop an interest in ICT, whereas others have been positive about ICT for a long time.

3.3 LEARNERS

ICT SKILLS

- **Impacts**
  - Pupils can share files using a USB key, but not in other ways.
- **Barriers**
  - Pupils have low awareness of e-safety issues. Many have published very personal information on blogs, unaware that it is on public view.
  - Pupils are not aware of copyright and plagiarism issues, although some teaching about this has taken place.
- **Enablers**
  - In France the B2i certificate is the measure of ICT competence, but this school is behind others in this respect.
  - Activities on the Internet Sans Crainte website (Internet Without Fear, part of the EC funded InSafe network) are useful to test ICT competences.

MOTIVATION, PARTICIPATION AND CONFIDENCE

- **Impacts**
  - Class timetables are published online.
  - Children say they like learning with ICT at school.
  - Pupils are more self-confident using an interactive whiteboard compared to a traditional board. They dare to get things wrong more readily, being able to delete their work and start again. This can help to reduce inhibitions.
- **Barriers**
  - There is no school website at present, but one is planned.
- **Enablers**
  - Children use ICT at home, mainly for video games and instant messaging.
  - At least 80 per cent of families have a computer, but it is often second-hand and of poor quality. Internet connectivity varies.
  - Children make a distinction between what they do at home (often random browsing) and more focused educational tasks in school.
  - ICT motivates the pupils, but it is how the teacher uses it that has the greatest effect. If all pupils see is pretty pictures, with no educational purpose, they are not interested.

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

- **Impacts**
  - Impact is not measured but there is a sense that it is real and is related to content.
  - The interactive whiteboard enables pupils to see things in two ways: in their exercise or text book and on the board.
  - Pupils are more responsive to tasks using the interactive whiteboard and activities are better integrated.
- **Barriers**
  - Although there are some pupils with physical disabilities, no particular adaptations are anticipated at present.

- **Enablers**
  - ICT in itself does not provide impact, but rather how it is used.
  - Podcasts in English help accent and intonation. There has been a noticeable improvement in language skills since podcasts were introduced.
  - When using ICT, more learning support materials are available. This offers more flexibility for teaching styles, and helps pupils to progress.
  - The interactive whiteboard enables the teacher to show images, such as Google Earth, in humanities lessons. The richer representation helps understanding.
  - The interactive whiteboard enables pupils to see images not available to them in text books. The teacher can zoom in and blank out the rest of the image, to give more weight to the image being studied. ICT is particularly useful in science for showing ideas and documentaries.
  - With the interactive whiteboard, lessons move faster, have a dynamism and rhythm, and there is less wasted time. The ability to link to other resources helps pupils to better understand the connection between things. It is easy to bring up lessons from the previous month to help pupils assess their own progress.
  - ICT is used for group and individual work, to increase the pace of learning, and to motivate pupils. However, it is not used outside school, for example to share their work or for informal learning activities.

4. REFERENCES

- **Sources:**
  - Interviews with teachers and lesson observations.
- **Further information:**
  - Strolling through English podcasts (ww3.ac-creteil.fr/ID/94/c14/spip/spip.php?article50 and www.ac-creteil.fr/id/94/c3/langues/podcast/ste.xml).
  - Worksheets produced by teachers from other schools (http://educ73.ac-grenoble.fr/nectar/nectar_enseignant/docs_pedas/lve_methodes/muzzy_in_gondoland.pdf and http://hebergement.ac-poitiers.fr/ecoles17/stjeandangely/Textes/Txt_LVE/Methodes/Muzzy.pdf).
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