
Garmendia, M., Martínez, G., Karrera, I., Larrañaga, N., Jiménez, E., Olveira, R., Basasoro, M. & Garitaonandia, C. (2021). [Experiencias de los docentes de Educación Primaria en la alfabetización digital del alumnado](#). SIC-Spain 2.0. (UE) y Universidad del País Vasco (UPV/EHU). Bilbao (España)

Executive Summary in English

The experiences of primary school teachers in the digital literacy of students.

This report is based on a qualitative focus group study conducted with more than 100 primary school teachers in each of the 17 Spanish Autonomous Regions in June of 2021. The summary has been developed within the framework of the European project known as SIC-Spain 2.0 ("Safer Internet Centre Spain 2.0), co-financed by the European Union through the CEF-Telecom programme, a call for Safer Internet (CEF-TC-2020-1), the purpose of which is to promote safer Internet use for minors, coordinated by the National Institute of Cybersecurity (*INCIBE*), through the Internet Safety Centre for Minors in Spain - IS4K.

Summary of the results

The pandemic, as well as the subsequent confinement, arrived very unexpectedly. Within days, primary school educators had to make the transition from in-person to online teaching. As participants of the process openly admit, this change in teaching practice demonstrated that they were not adequately trained in the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT, hereafter). Since the confinement ended, the use of ICT has increased from the start of the 2020/2021 academic year. Teachers believe they have the resources, skills, and interest to implement technology in the classroom. However, other educators admit to having difficulties in using ICT and have returned to traditional practices.

Communication with families

The use of ICT has made communication with families easier and more flexible. This is highly positive for mothers and fathers who have not been able to visit their children's educational centres in-person at the scheduled times due to their working hours. Educators admit that such channels of communication are not the most appropriate for dealing with sensitive issues that require a personal touch, which clashes with the impersonal nature of ICT. This is why most educators are in favour of mixed communication formats that include both ICT and in-person meetings.

Digital resources and uses

The onset of the pandemic hastened the use of technological devices and online platforms in order to successfully respond to the demands of confinement. This situation has encouraged educators' inquisitiveness and their acquisition of skills in the use of digital technologies. Moreover, teachers believe that these technologies offer advantages for their teaching role, and consequently, they have positively welcomed their implementation. Some educators have changed their teaching habits, adapting their traditional methods of working along with their tools to the new opportunities offered by ICT. However, this is still an obstacle to be overcome by part of the teaching profession. Most schools have increased the availability of digital devices.

However, in order to ensure the trouble-free use of ICT in education, other complementary services are required, such as a stable Wi-Fi network, optimal wiring conditions, maintenance, and the fast, efficient repair of computer equipment. This situation is especially critical in certain autonomous regions, where the digital divide between schools located in urban and rural areas has been highlighted.

Socio-economic inequalities of families

Teachers are concerned about the lack of access to ICT education experienced by some of their pupils resulting from the digital divide, as they have noticed a deficiency of ICT resources in some families (equipment, broadband connection, etc.). This can lead to educational exclusion among pupils. The lack of digital literacy in some families and a shortage of equipment can have negative consequences on the learning process. Although educators try to fill these gaps through alternative solutions, some students are being excluded from their right to an ICT education. This is especially true among families of diverse ethnic backgrounds. In addition to these socio-economic inequalities among families, a lack of school resources is also a problem, both in state and subsidised schools. However, teachers recognise the efforts made by administration, social services, and other non-profit organisations to alleviate these inequalities.

Digital training needs of teachers

The pandemic helped to galvanize the perception that training in the use of digital technology for teaching was crucial for the work being carried out by educators. They value the fact that the training programmes are specific and adapted to the reality of the centres. Moreover, such programmes are perceived as practical, and they can be carried out during school hours. Educators underline the need for greater regulation of the role of the school ICT coordinator, who is a key player in the acquisition of digital skills by the teaching staff.

Digital literacy opportunities

Technology makes it possible to encourage more autonomous learning that is adapted to the abilities and needs of each student. It allows for the implementation of new learning methods, such as cooperative learning, which stimulate research so that pupils can learn to understand and interpret information. However, online education cannot replace in-person teaching, nor can it replace the role of the teacher. The use of ICT motivates pupils, and can serve to develop their creativity, as well as help them differentiate between educational and recreational use, thereby enabling them to make safer and more critical use of the Internet.

Digital school mediation

The Internet provides girls and boys with a space to socialise, which means that conflicts are more likely to arise. Some educators try to find solutions by reacting proactively and proposing educational dynamics based on the conflicts that emerge. Others call for greater control over the use of technological devices. In any case, both parties point to the need for greater involvement of families in their children's online education. The most recurrent topics are safety and cybersecurity of minors, with a strong focus on privacy, such as issues related to digital footprints, data protection, and image-sharing. At the same time, the problem of peaceful coexistence among families arising from WhatsApp groups also stands out. Educators assume that they cannot intervene in this area, as it involves family issues, over which they have no authority. Teachers try to safeguard the school environment against these kinds of disagreements and stay on the side lines of such issues. They also report a lack of judgement on the part of families in supervising children's online activities.