Adaptive and Inclusive Learning Environment (AILE) Project: Teacher Survey Responses

As part of the Adaptive and Inclusive Learning Environment (AILE) project the Institute of Child Education and Psychology Europe (ICEPE) conducted surveys with 38 Irish teachers regarding their use of technology and teaching experience. The sample was comprised of both primary (47%) and post-primary (53%) school teachers. There was a relatively even distribution regarding the age range of teacher respondents, with over one quarter (28%) reporting to be between 20-29 years of age. Most of the teachers worked in urban locations (87.5%) and the majority had been teaching for 20 years or more (34%).

Teacher respondents were asked about their use of technology in the classroom. Sixty-eight percent of respondents reported using technology daily to support their students learning and 92% of teachers perceived having enough time to include technology in their teaching. Most of the respondents reported having a medium or above experience level with regards to the use of technology and only 12% of the sample described themselves as a beginner. Predominantly teachers reported a medium or above skill level with regards to the use of specific technologies such as word processing, tv, computers and interactive whiteboards. Technologies were predominantly used for administrative activities and teaching activities in the classroom and were less likely used for homework activities. The factors that most strongly influenced teachers use of technology included; the experience of other teachers, availability of technology in the classroom and the availability of in-school training in the use of technology. The greatest barriers to the use of technology were a lack of access to technology in the classroom, students lack of access to technology in the home and insufficient/ineffective technology in the classroom. Teachers reported that learning to use specific software and applications, and learning how to make multimedia content for educational purposes would be particularly beneficial with regards to their use of technology for learning.

Teachers also reported on their use of technology and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Most of the teacher respondents reported that the impact of Covid-19 was associated with increased confidence in the use of technology, increased perceptions of the usefulness of technology, and increased use of technology for education purposes. The findings indicate that the Covid-19 Pandemic was associated with positive outcomes in relation to teachers use of technology.

With regards to student behaviour, 50% of teachers reported having one or two children in their class who are impulsive, have difficulty staying still, waiting their turn or interrupt excessively and over 70% of the teachers reported having between one to five students in their class who have difficulty following lessons and instructions. Sixty-eight percent of the teachers who responded reported having between three to ten students in their class who have difficulty memorising material. All of the teachers who responded reported having at least one student in their class who has difficulty following oral instructions and almost all of the teachers reported having at least one student in their class who has difficulty with text comprehension. With regards to student's social development, 90% of teacher respondents reported that at least one student in their class has difficulty initiating and responding appropriately to peers. In relation to the home context, 86% of teacher respondents reported that there was at least one student in their class who lacked adequate educational support at home and most teachers (77%), reported that students in their class can access technology at home.

In relation to education resources and design, 52% of the teachers who responded reported that the font and/or character size of letters impacts on their students reading ability. Most teachers also reported that students understand information better when someone else reads the text aloud. These findings highlight the significance of resource design and in particular indicate the importance of visual and aural aspects of content in technology design.

Collectively the findings indicate that the Irish teacher respondents had a good competence and skill level with regards to the use of technologies in the classroom. The teachers acknowledged that increased training with regards to different software and multimedia would support their use of technology and that Covid-19 positively impacted on their technology use. The responses brought to light some of the diverse challenges that are prevalent in school contexts including student attention, adherence to instruction, memorisation, peer and home relationships. The findings also indicated the significance of visual and aural qualities that are important for learning.