

INTRODUCING TABLETS IN A PORTUGUESE SCHOOL: A MICOOL PROJECT CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

The increasing popularity of tablets in society generally has sparked much interest in their educational potential and while a number of studies on the use of tablets in schools have been conducted world-wide most of these have been conducted in English-speaking and well-resourced education jurisdictions such as the UK, Australia, New Zealand and the USA. Studies conducted on the use of tablets in non-English speaking and educationally under-resourced countries are less wide-spread. This research conducted as part of an EU Erasmus+ Project (Micool), focusses on the introduction of iPads in a remote, rural region of Portugal where persistent under investment in education, particularly educational IT, has been acutely felt for almost a decade. Using a case study methodology this study reveals how many of the benefits associated with using mobile technologies in other educational jurisdictions were also replicated here, and how innovative teachers, despite working within a very traditional and rigid system, used the devices to suit their specific curriculum and classroom needs. Furthermore, this study will also reveal how international events such as the financial and economic collapse of 2008/2009 negatively impacted national education policies in a European country, the effects of which were acutely manifested in this school, particularly when it came to IT provision and support.