

ICT

Syllabus for Primary Schools

RATIONALE

THE ICT PROGRAMME

For Primary Schools

Rationale

It is becoming increasingly clear that our educational institutions have a key role to play in the empowerment of their learners by helping them develop the appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes in order for them to be able to operate in an ICT-rich world. The ability to make informed judgements on the effects of ICT on the individual and on society is becoming indispensable in today's world. Moreover, the ability to use ICT to find, process, analyse, present and disseminate ideas and information is becoming an ever increasingly important learning competency. ICT is fast becoming a 'critical filter': the possession of the capability to make optimal use of ICT in a variety of environments and situations is leading to more attractive job prospects and better life chances. Undoubtedly this trend is likely to continue.

It is important to keep in mind that the role of ICT in the primary classroom is principally that of educational tool. It is there to provide a further means for the teacher to plan alternative teaching and learning strategies, and to provide learners with a different learning environment.

ICT must be considered as a medium for the teacher to convey every aspect of the curriculum. In this sense, ICT implementation in the primary classroom must always be seen in the light of curriculum subjects such as mathematics, the languages, social studies, the arts, life skills and religious education. It must therefore be emphasised that the use of ICT in the primary classroom should be integrated in any activity where it is considered effective, in the teaching and learning of any aspect of the National Minimum Curriculum.

However, although ICT is not to be considered as a discrete subject in itself, its effective use both by learners and teachers implies that command and consolidation of basic ICT skills are essential. This Syllabus lists those basic ICT skills that learners should be confident in by the time they leave the primary classroom.

General Aims of ICT Education

1. To help learners become competent, confident, responsible and critical users of ICT by making efficient, effective and creative use of basic software and hardware in their everyday classroom activities;
2. To assist learners to become responsible, critical and reflective users of ICT by recognising the capabilities and limitations of the technology and its impact on society in general;
3. To encourage learners to develop the appropriate social skills that are essential for co-operative and collaborative learning by using ICT;
4. To empower ICT-disadvantaged learners by ensuring sufficient access for those learners who have little out-of-school opportunities to use the technology;
5. To encourage learners to develop the appropriate personal skills essential for independent lifelong learning through ICT;
6. To help the learners with special needs integrate themselves within school and society by increasing their independence and by developing their knowledge, abilities and interests; and,
7. To enable learners to take control of their own learning.

Use of Software and Internet

Some software titles and Internet websites are mentioned in the notes section to give an idea of the kind of ICT activities that can be used to cover a particular item in the Syllabus. However it should strongly be emphasised that:

- The software mentioned should only be used as a guideline.
- There may be similar activities in other software available in the classroom or on other websites that can cover the same items.
- Software currently available in classrooms may be subject to change over the years, while websites may be removed from the Internet.
- New software titles will be introduced over the years to cover particular skills not covered by current software.

Teachers should therefore concentrate on covering the items listed in the Syllabus rather than a particular software title. The software should be considered as a vehicle, not as a target in itself, and any software other than the one listed can be used to cover a specific Syllabus item or skill.

Teachers should also refer to the Internet and make use of various online interactive activities which can be used in combination with or instead of software currently available in the classroom, and which address ICT skills as listed in the Syllabus. The following Internet links can be used as a starting point:

<http://skola.gov.mt/ictprimary/>

This website includes resources in the form of lesson plans and relevant teaching and learning aids, addressing skills across the National Minimum Curriculum.

<http://skola.gov.mt/primarythemes/>

This website includes resources in the form of themes with relevant activities, information and links, addressing topics and themes across the National Minimum Curriculum.

<http://www.skola.gov.mt>

This website is a portal with various international links to sites covering, in part or in whole, various aspects of the National Minimum Curriculum. These sites are updated regularly and will include new material from time to time.