



EMEDUS
Europe Media Education

WP3. Formal Media Education

IRELAND



1. Education System

In Ireland the responsible body for education is the DES (Department of Education and Skills), although the Irish education system is the result of a partnership between the State and various agencies and private organizations. Formal education is compulsory between the ages 6 and 16, or until students have completed three years of post-primary education.

In the next two decades education in Ireland will be transformed thanks to the *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030*, which was enacted in 2011. It proposes more flexibility within the education system and hopes to improve the quality of education by putting it more in touch with reality.

2. Policies in Media Literacy

The Irish Government has highlighted in the following documents the impact of the knowledge society in education: in 1998 the program *Schools IT2000: A Policy Framework for the New Millennium*; between 2001-2003 *A Blueprint for the Future of ICT in Irish Education* and in 2013 *Investing Effectively in Information and Communications Technology in Schools 2008-2013*, which is a report by the Ministry of Education and Science on the priorities for investment in ICT.

Government education policies have neglected aspects of citizenship, participation and democracy

In 1998 an important initiative was the creation of the National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE) which carried out three main actions:

- The *Technology Integration Initiative (TII)*, which aimed at updating technology.
- The *Teaching Skills Initiative (TSI)*, which aimed at improving teaching skills.
- The *Schools Support Initiative (SSI)*, which included the *Schools Integration Project (SIP)* and the development of the *Scoilnet portal*.

In 2011 the Department of Education and Skills (DES) published a national strategy to improve the literacy of children and young people between the years 2011 and 2020 called [*Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life*](#) in which Media Literacy was not specifically described. However, the need to extend the concept of media literacy to include new digital media was mentioned.

3. Media Literacy and National Curricula

The agency in charge of developing the national curriculum is the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment.



In primary school the subject of Media Education appears together with *Developing Citizenship* as a unit within *Myself and the Wider World*, one of the three strand units (subject branches) in the subject of *Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE)*, which is integrated into the curriculum. The aim is for students to acquire communicative skills and be able to discern between different types of media, although the emphasis is on protecting students from the negative effects of pressure from business and advertising.

It also emphasizes the need to use ICT as a support tool in this subject to search for, gather, and present information, use email or do videoconferencing.

In post-primary education the SPHE subject contains 10 modules which include *Communication Skills*. The objective is to improve the basic skills of listening and expression in general as well as get to know the different types of communication and their contexts. It is a flexible program which is integrated in the curriculum which schools decide how to implement as required. Any primary school teacher can give the classes but they must show familiarity with the topics and work in cooperation with other teachers who work in the field.

As a result, a support service to the SPHE subject has been created, in collaboration with the Department of Health and Children, to assist schools in teaching this subject.

4. Tools to measure the Level of Competencies

The primary school curriculum provides guidelines for assessing the SPHE subject in which Media Education appears. Joint assessment with other subjects is recommended based on observation by teachers, assignments, portfolios and projects done by the student.

In post-primary education there is student self-assessment through questionnaires and evaluation sheets as well as assessment done by the teacher depending on specific tasks and classroom projects carried out by students.

In terms of an official certificate in the subject of SPHE, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) indicates that they can consider the possibility of granting one at both a local and national level.

5. Teacher Media Training

The Teaching Council is the body that is responsible for reviewing and accrediting all teacher training programs in Ireland.

With respect to teacher training, the lack of specific training programs in media education within the teaching curricula has meant that teachers do not receive adequate training in this field (neither in their initial education nor further studies).

However, the report titled *Initial Teacher Education: Criteria and Guidelines for Programme Providers* indicates that the teacher training curriculum should include subjects such as *ICT in Teaching* and *Learning and Literacy*, the latter of which should be encouraged by teachers among students. It specifies that teachers should acquire ethical and professional values as well as analytical skills and skills in critical thinking, problem solving, self-evaluation and reflection and communication and relational competencies.

6. ICT in Schools

ICT is integrated into the primary education curriculum in subjects such as English, Mathematics, Visual Arts, Gaelic and SPHE in the development of various tasks and projects. In post-primary education, ICT is included in the curriculum as a tool for working in the other subjects or as an integral part of both the curriculum and assessment (e.g. GIS in Geography, CAD in Design and Communication and Music Technology in Music).



The keys to the inclusion of ICT in schools can be summarized as follows:

- Schools enjoy good infrastructure and equipment close to the European average.
- The number of students attending schools connected to the Internet is higher than in the rest of the EU.
- The use of ICT by teachers is above many European countries which demonstrate a high level of professional development and support from schools.

There are a number of programs implemented in Ireland; the most important are the following:

- In 1997 the use of ICT in education began with the launch of the program *Schools IT2000: A Policy Framework for the New Millennium* by the Irish Government.
- At the same time the *Schools Internet Access Scheme* was launched to connect schools to the Internet and in 2004 the *Computer Networking Grants Program* was established to fund scholarships.
- The program *Blueprint for the Future of ICT in Irish Education* further advanced the use of ICT in education by making more funding available to schools, giving schools new possibilities to access the Internet, integrating ICT in curricular programs and promoting the professional development of teachers.
- The NCCA has published several reports on the assessment of ICT in primary and post-primary education since 2004 which forms the basis of ICT training in schools.

Annex. Country Key Features

(a)	Languages	English (official, the language generally used), Irish (Gaelic or Gaeilge) (official, spoken mainly in areas along the western coast)
	Population	4,775,982 (July 2013 est.)
	Major cities	DUBLIN (capital) 1.084 million (2009)
	Government type	Republic, parliamentary democracy
	GDP (Purchasing Power Parity)	\$191.5 billion (2012 est.)
	GDP real growth rate	0.7% (2012 est.)
	GDP per capita (PPP)	\$41,700 (2012 est.)
	GDP composition by sector	Agriculture: 2% Industry: 29% Services: 69% (2010 est.)
(b)	GDP per head (PPS)	127.0 (year 2011) (Index, EU27=100)
(c)	Year of EU entry	1973
	Currency	Member of the eurozone since 1999 (€)
	Schengen area	Not a member of Schengen
(d)	Pupils and students (ISCED levels 1-6) (1 000)	1.112,3 (year 2011)
	Pupils at ISCED level 1 (1 000)	511,5 (year 2011)
	Pupils at ISCED level 2 (1 000)	186,1 (year 2011)
	Pupils and students at ISCED level 3 (1 000)	151,8 (year 2011)
	Students at ISCED level 4 (1 000)	66,7 (year 2011)

Source: Original authorship, using data from:

- (a) *Central Intelligence Agency (2013). The World Factbook 2013-14.* Washington, DC [Retrieved from: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html>]

- (b) European Commission (2012). *Country Fact Sheet: Ireland*. Directorate-General Regional Policy. Analysis Unit C3. European Commission [Retrieved from: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/information/brochures/pages/country2012/index_en.cfm]
- (c) European Union (2013). Member states of the EU. European Union [Retrieved from: http://europa.eu/about-eu/countries/index_en.htm]
- (d) Eurostat (2013). Education and training. Pupils and students (tps00051). File: educ_ilev.xls [Retrieved from: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/education/data/main_tables]

Sources

A Blueprint for the Future on ITC in Irish Education

<http://www.ncte.ie/cao/documents/d247.PDF>

European Schoolnet. (2012). *Survey of Schools: ICT in Education. Country Profile: Ireland*. Brussels: European Commission.

<https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/sites/digital-agenda/files/Ireland%20country%20profile.pdf>

Initial Teacher Education: Criteria and Guidelines for Programme Providers

<http://www.teachingcouncil.ie/fileupload/Teacher%20Education/Final%20Criteria%20and%20Guidelines%20for%20Existing%20Progs%20Aug2011.pdf>

Investing Effectively in Information and Communications Technology in Schools 2008-2013

http://test.ncte.ie/media/Final%20ICT%20Strategy_group_report.pdf

Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life

http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/lit_num_strategy_full.pdf

National Centre for Technology in Education

http://www.ncte.ie/npadc/ncte_report.pdf

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

<http://www.ncca.ie/en/>

National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030

http://www.hea.ie/sites/default/files/national_strategy_for_higher_education_2030.pdf

Schools IT2000: A Policy Framework for the New Millennium

http://www.ncte.ie/npadc/ncte_report.pdf