

SUMMARY REPORT 2019



# eTwinning in an era of change

*Impact on teachers' practice, skills, and professional development opportunities, as reported by eTwinners*



Erasmus+



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# 1. INTRODUCTION

The eTwinning Monitoring Report is published every two years and takes stock of the action's key achievements as well as the areas in need of further development, through an analysis of a large-scale survey of eTwinning respondents. This booklet is a summary of the eTwinning Monitoring Report 2019. The full report will be available at <https://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/publications.htm> in December 2019.

The survey, launched in late 2018, was designed to investigate how the eTwinning is affecting participating teachers' professional practice and how it might improve the professional development services it offers. Thanks to the 10000+ eTwinners who voluntarily answered the survey in 2018, the current report provides grounded evidence on which eTwinning can develop its services to the educational communities of Europe. It should be kept in mind that this report is solely based on teachers' self-perception of how eTwinning has impacted and influenced their work.

The views of teachers expressed in this edition of the monitoring survey largely confirm those of the previous two editions of 2014 and 2016: eTwinning continues to have a significant effect on the development of individual teachers' skills and teaching practices. Indeed, respondents' reported effects on teachers' skills and practices as well as those of students, are as high, and in many cases higher, than what teachers had reported in the previous editions of the survey. The advent of the eTwinning Schools permits us to see how eTwinning works in the environment of schools where staff commitment is high and school management espouse the principals of eTwinning: inclusiveness, collaboration, support, active role of students and ongoing professional development.

This summary report starts, in Chapter 1, with the identification of **the profile of the respondents**, the vast majority of which are teachers, with strong representation of users in eTwinning Schools.

The document then continues, in Chapter 2, with an analysis of the **impact of eTwinning on the practice of teachers and students** in various areas: teaching practice, priorities in teacher and student development, teachers' use of technology for educational purposes, students use of technology for learning, effects of involvement in eTwinning on students.

Chapter 3 deals with the participants' perception on the impact eTwinning had on their **skills and how they are used with technology**.

Chapter 4 turns the **attention on students** and what impact eTwinning had on their learning and motivation.

Chapter 5 gives an overview of the impact eTwinning has on the **whole school** and a comparison between the results of participants in eTwinning Schools and the ones who are in normal schools.

Chapter 6 explores some of the areas covered by the recent TALIS 2018 report and the possibilities that eTwinning can offer in some areas of educational policy.

The final chapter 7 wraps up the **lessons learnt from this survey** and puts its results in a wider context by comparing them with available trends and studies, also providing ideas for further development.

## 1.1. Respondents' profile and categories used to cross-analyse the survey data

The survey was answered by 10,349 participants. Out of these, in question 18, 1,745 stated that they had not "been involved in any eTwinning activities or projects during the last 2 years", and for this reason they were directed out of the survey, excluding them from further analysis. The remaining 8600 or so respondents are included in varying degrees in each question. In a survey of 44 questions it is not unusual for respondents to skip some questions and the total number of respondents is given in the graphs relating to each question. The lowest figure of respondents is 6152.

The profile of respondents reflects the pattern of the previous surveys with the majority (91%) being teachers. Regarding roles within eTwinning, 16% are eTwinning Ambassadors, while 31% are teaching in a school holding the eTwinning School Label. In terms of age, the findings again reflect the profile found in the previous two surveys with 79% of respondents falling in the range of 36 – 55 years with only 7 % being less than 30 and 12% over the age of 55. In terms of years of teaching experience, it is quite an experienced group with 79% working between 11 and 30+ years with just 1% stating

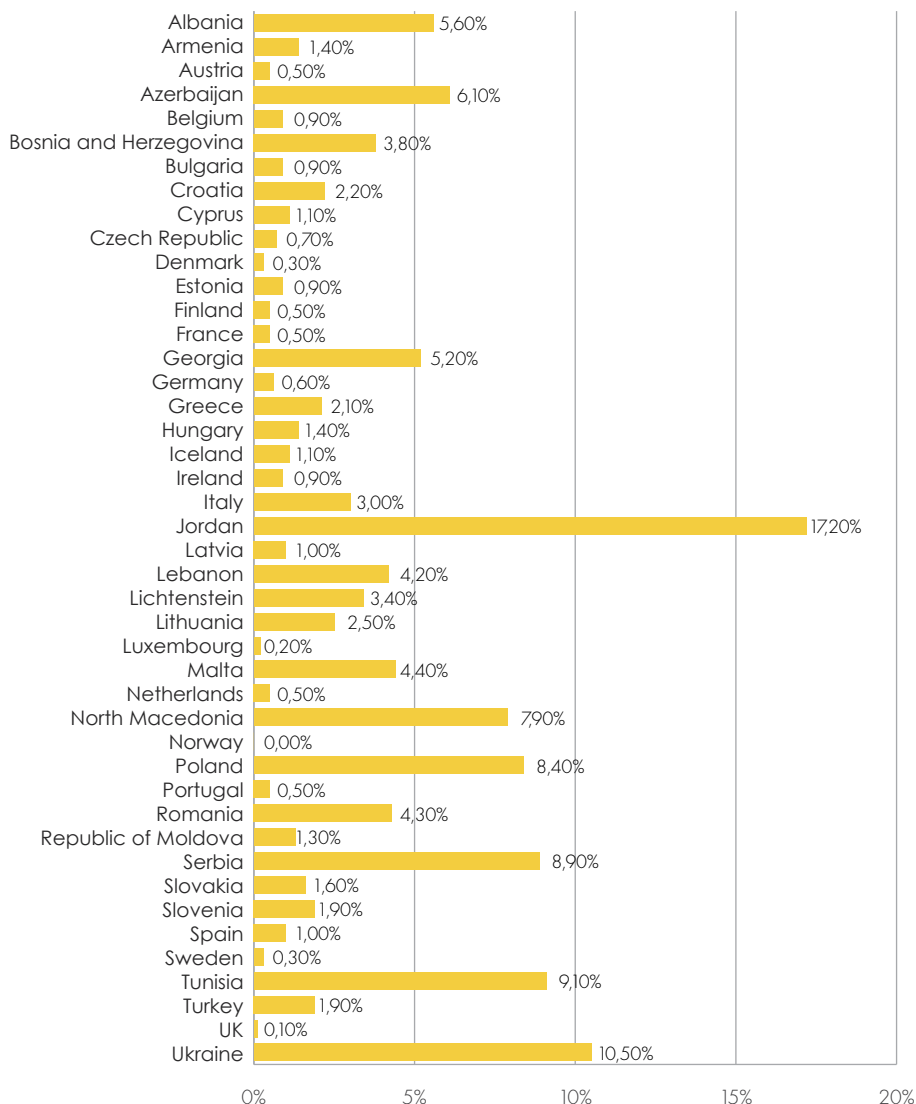
they are in their first year of teaching. It must be said that the body of respondents represent the best of eTwinners, the most active, dedicated and committed ones. In relation to the respondents from awarded eTwinning Schools, it must be said that there is a relatively high representation (29% of all the respondents are members of schools awarded with the eTwinning School label: this percentage is obviously much higher than the percentage of teachers in eTwinning Schools (currently 2400 awarded schools with 9786 teachers) against the overall eTwinning school population.

The level of education the respondents are teaching shows that the majority are in secondary level 87% (46% in lower and 41% in upper secondary level), with primary teachers making the next biggest group at 41%. The respondents could choose more than one response in this question as many teachers work at different levels either in the same school or in different schools.

While the range of subject disciplines taught is very wide (37 subjects) the most frequently represented are consistent with the subjects of eTwinning registered users, with Foreign languages (41%) on top, followed by Primary Schools subjects (20%), Language and literature (17%) and ICT (10%). Again, participants could choose more than one answer here and teachers frequently teach more than one subject.

The pattern of country participation is reflected in the response rate by country, Turkey and Italy heading the group, while Spain, Greece and Poland also show strong representation. However, comparing this to the ratio of respondents to the total number of people registered per country as seen in Figure 3 below, gives a better picture of the spread of responses per country, also suggesting the level of representativeness of respondents compared to the overall population.

Figure 1: Ratio of number of respondents/total registered by country.



From this chart, with figures ranging from 0.1% up to 17% (average being 3%), we can infer that it's impossible to establish a sound level of representativeness for most countries, although the ones beyond 5% probably give a genuine image of the situation at country level.





## 2. THE IMPACT OF ETWINNING ON TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

### 2.1. Impact on new teaching practice

The first area presented deals with the perception of the impact eTwinning has on respondents' teaching practice.

The points below are those where participants reported that eTwinning has the most effect<sup>1</sup>:

**90%** Project based Teaching skills and cross curricular skills

**87%** Technological skills for teaching

**86%** Ability to assess cross curricular skills

**85%** Collaborative skills in working with teachers of other subjects

**84%** Ability to choose the right teaching strategy in any given situation.

It is probably not surprising that **project-based skills are seen as the area that has developed the most**, seeing as how the interaction between teachers and pupils is based on project work. However, the development of cross curricular skills is an interesting one as traditionally, teachers have been seen to work in isolation, but modern educational trends put emphasis on breaking this mould towards a more collaborative approach and eTwinning seems to provide the opportunity to do this.

.....  
1 The reported percentages are based on a combination of the top 2 categories in each question ( a lot/quite a bit)

Equally interesting is the development of cross curricular assessment skills. Assessing what has been termed “21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills” has been one of the stumbling blocks to adopting new pedagogical approaches but the eTwinning teachers represented in this report seem to be overcoming this.

## 2.2. Impact on existing Teaching practice

Below the top five practices that teachers report doing now as a direct result of their involvement in eTwinning. This means that eTwinning has somehow changed not only the way they teach (teaching practice), as mentioned above, but also that it has increased their existing practices, as follows:

**77 %** Teaching the understanding of themes that cut across disciplines

**76%** Basing their teaching on students' competence development as much as their knowledge acquisition and retention

**74%** Teaching the process of learning how to learn to their students, developing awareness of their learning process and needs and developing their ability to overcome obstacles in order to learn successfully

**73%** Facilitating discussion with the whole class with most time dedicated to students talking

**69%** Giving different work to the students who have difficulties and/or to those who can advance faster.

The top result (“themes across disciplines”) is again related to a specific asset of eTwinning: **going beyond the confinement of the subject matter and encourage synergies with other topics**, mostly via project-based work. At the same time the improvement in assessment skills seems to reflect in their teaching towards students' competences rather than traditional knowledge acquisition, coupled with a more personalised approach to students learning goals.

## 2.3. Priorities in teacher and student development

The next area to be highlighted are the top 5 priorities that teachers report in relation to their own development and the development of their students. The teachers perceive that eTwinning has had a strong positive result both for them and their students particularly in their abilities to deal with multi-cultural situations:

**83%** Promoting intercultural dialogue through collaborative work between colleagues and learners and with various stakeholders

**82%** Ensuring I acquire social, civic and intercultural competence

**80%** Ensuring my students acquire social, civic and intercultural competence

**79%** Developing my competences to design and use a wide range of teaching strategies to meet the specific learning needs of learners of all abilities with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socio-economic backgrounds

**78%** Providing my students with opportunities to learn about and practise democratic values and active citizenship.

Multiculturalism is a fact of modern day society and teachers are faced with this challenge in their classrooms on a daily basis. It is heartening then to see that the **respondents to this survey place the promotion of intercultural dialogue at such a high level** as well as the wish to develop further their competence in designing and using a wide range of teaching strategies to meet all such challenges.

## 2.4. Teachers' use of technology for educational purposes

The use of technology in education has been the subject of much debate in the past decades. That, coupled with the developments in technology itself, has left many teachers slightly bewildered as to when and how to use technology effectively. eTwinning by its nature encourages teachers to use technology appropriately – as a means and not as an aim - and the 5 areas where eTwinning has reportedly had the most effect in terms of teachers use of technology for educational purposes are shown below:

**80%** use ICT/multimedia/the internet to prepare lessons

**80%** use ICT/multimedia/the internet during lessons

**76%** participate in online training courses

**73%** prepare and use digital presentations during lessons

**72%** create their own digital learning materials for students.

Again, it may be said that eTwinning has instilled a **technological confidence** in teachers who use it as a tool among many when it is appropriate to do so, especially in preparing and running lessons, but also, and interestingly, in attending professional development activities.

## 2.5. Students use of technology for learning

With regard to students and technology it is often stated that today's students are digital natives, at home in the complex world of technology and social media; but do they use it appropriately and does it help their educational development? Certainly, formal education has a role in guiding the younger generations in the use of technology, especially as a tool for their learning. The top 5 Areas where eTwinning has reportedly had the most effect in terms of students use of technology may be seen below:

**75%** use technology to collaborate in group work and project work

**68%** use technology to learn at their own pace

**68%** use ICT/multimedia/ the internet during lessons

**64%** use ICT/multimedia/ the internet for homework purposes

**61%** play digital games for learning purposes.

What eTwinning does is help students understand the nature of technology and how it may be used to find information. Behind these figures are classrooms where **students are taught to be discerning in their searches, to sift the false from the true, to check and double check**. They use technology to work together, mostly in projects, and to personalise their own learning. Not to forget that they can do so while also having fun through the use of educational games.

## 2.6. Effects of involvement in eTwinning on students

It is interesting to dwell on the areas where the reported effects of involvement on students include many of those 21st Century Skills such as collaboration, teamwork and understanding of technology. Most importantly it has a very positive effect on student motivation to learn. The top 5 areas where eTwinning has reportedly had the most impact on students are outlined here:

92% Fostering collaborative work among students

92% Increasing students' motivation

90% Developing students' learning skills

90% Improving personal relations among students

90% Raising students' interest in new technologies.

Apart from the natural impact on collaborative work, it's important to notice **the effect on increasing students' motivation**, which ranks ex-aequo on top with 92% of respondents. It means that eTwinning is seen by students as an activity which engages them and – as also reported – improves the personal relations among them. In other words, eTwinning activities do not limit their impact on the learning of subjects matters or topics, but has an influence, according to the respondents, on the well-being of their students.

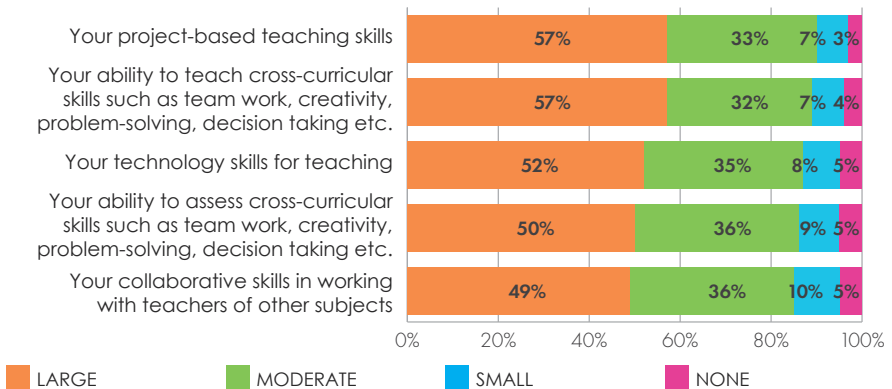


## 3. TEACHERS' SKILLS AND USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN TEACHING PRACTICE

### 3.1. Teachers' Skills

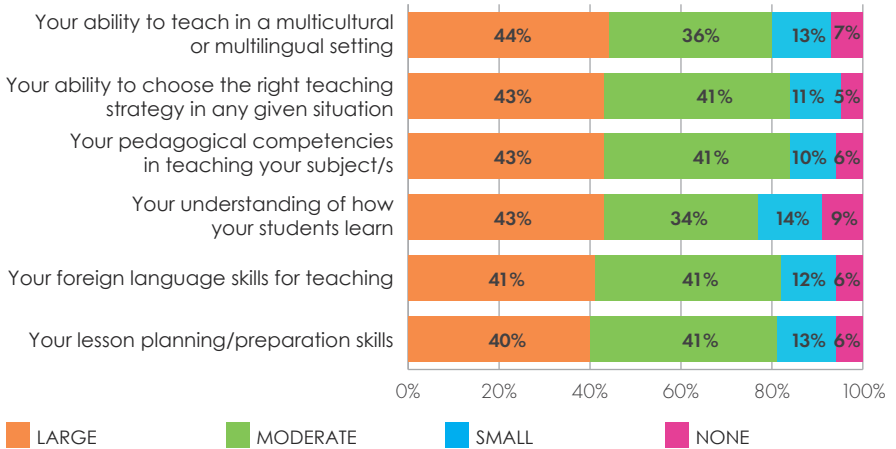
The previous section dealt with the perceived impact of eTwinning on teaching practices (both existing and new). We now address how the respondents felt eTwinning impacted their individual skills. The following question was posed in the survey 'Considering your current/previous eTwinning activities, what positive impact do you consider they have had on your skills in the following areas?'. With the help of a number of statements, eTwinners were able to assess the level of impact on various skills and abilities. The results are very positive with an average of 70%-80% of respondents stating that eTwinning has had a large/moderate effect on all the areas. The results are grouped below into two charts (figures 2, 3,) showing in descending order the areas where the respondents felt eTwinning was having the most impact.

Figure 2: The top 5 areas where involvement in eTwinning has had the greatest effect



Collaboration with teachers of other disciplines, cross curricular approaches and assessment, as has been mentioned before, point to a breakdown in the traditional isolationist position of teachers, to a integrated team within a school dedicated to developing their schools as learning organisations.

Figure 3: The middle 5 areas where involvement in eTwinning has had the greatest effect

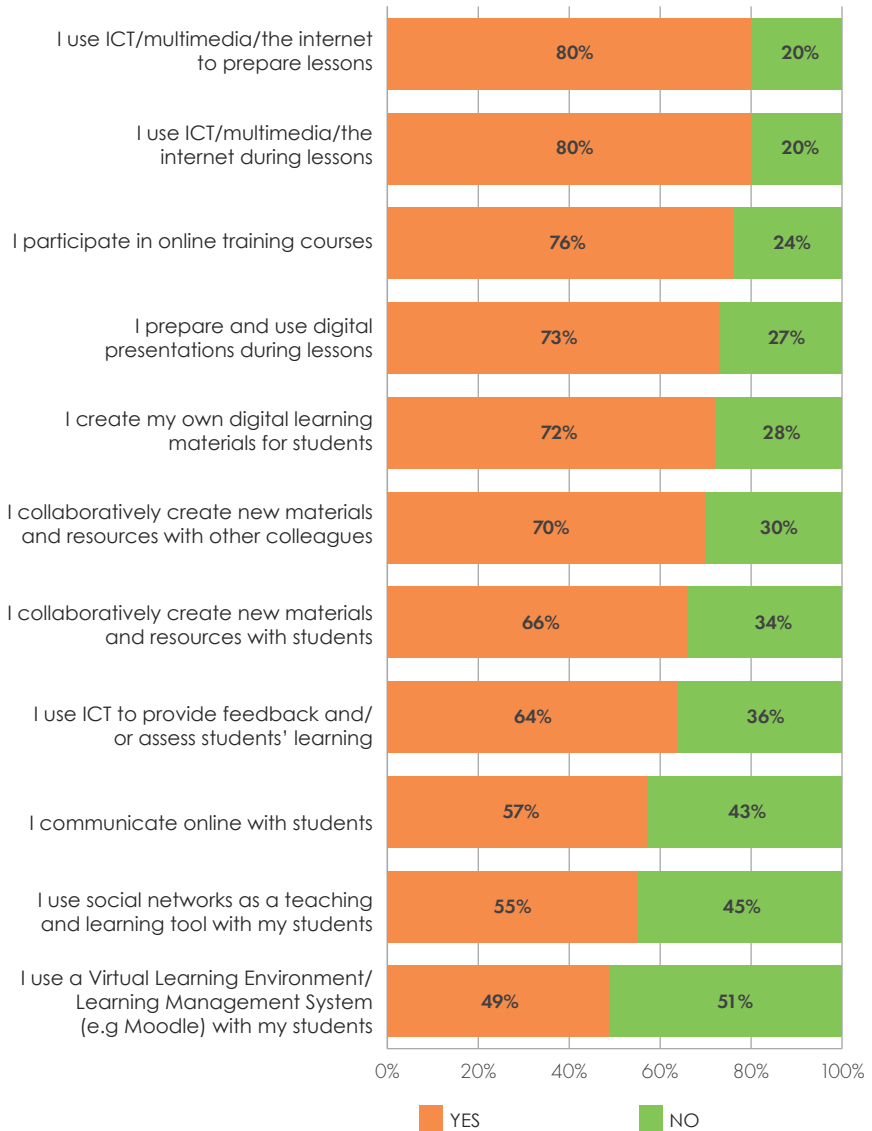


The multicultural dimension has already been discussed in previous sections; in addition, it may be seen that teachers feel they better understand how their students learn. In addition to feeling more confident in cross curricular work, they also feel they have improved in their competence to better plan, prepare and teach their own subject.

### 3.2. Teachers' use of technology

The results of the survey indicate that eTwinning had an impact both on respondents' teaching practice and skills. How can we then put together these two elements and combine them with the use of technology? The participants were asked if there was an increase in the frequency of engaging in technologically enhanced teaching and learning methods as a result of their involvement in eTwinning. The answer was overwhelmingly "yes", as can be seen in figure 4 below.

Figure 4: Increase in use of technologically advanced teaching and learning methods



In addition to using the internet both for preparation and during class, it may be seen that these eTwinners also work in collaboration to develop new digital material and resources. They are also very likely to engage in online professional development to enhance their pedagogical skills and competences.





## 4. ETWINNING AND STUDENTS' LEARNING

It may be seen from the analysis in the previous chapter that eTwinning certainly effects teachers and their work in the classroom. As a result, there is, of course, a knock-on effect on students. Some of these have been discussed in previous sections but the full range may be seen in figures 5, 6 & 7 below.

*Figure 5: Increase in students learning practices as a result of involvement in eTwinning*

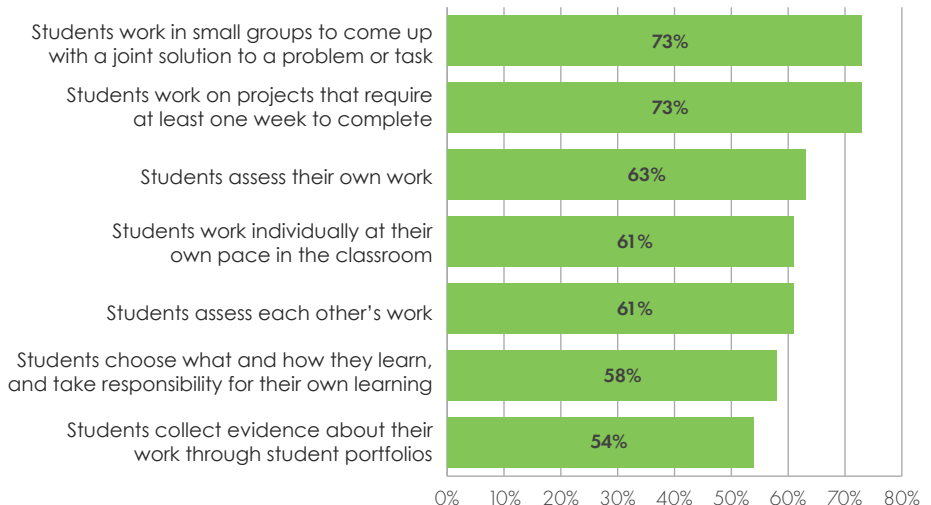


Figure 6: Perceived impact of involvement in eTwinning on students by area

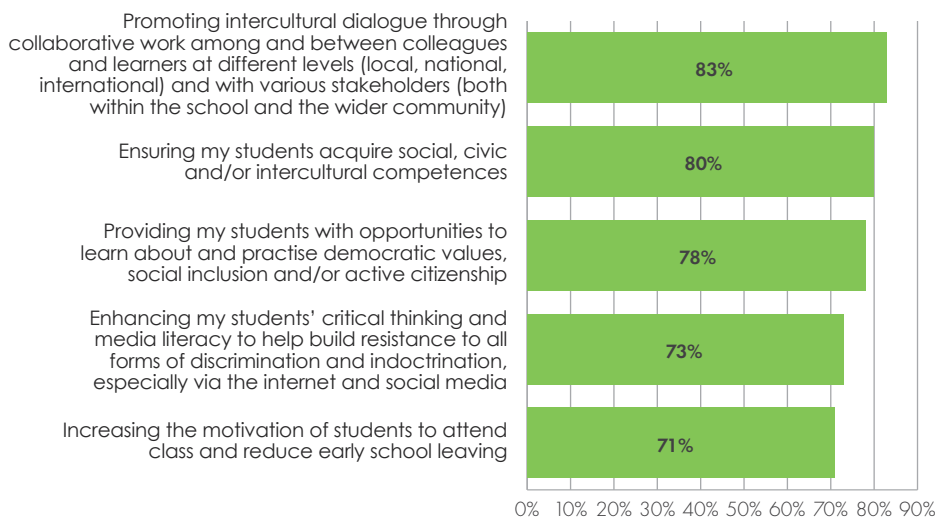
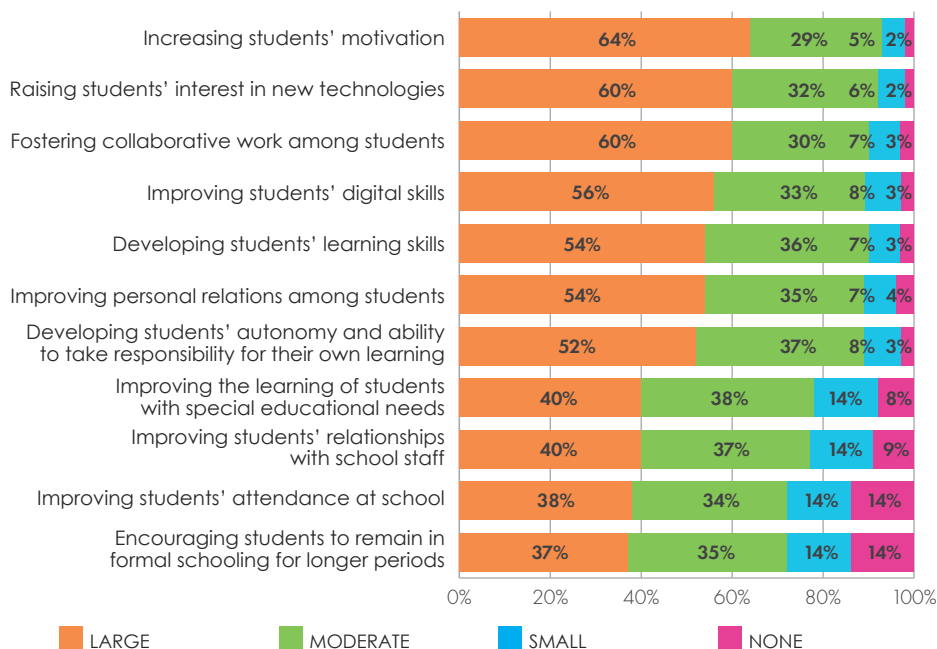


Figure 7: Perceived effects of involvement in eTwinning on students work and learning practices





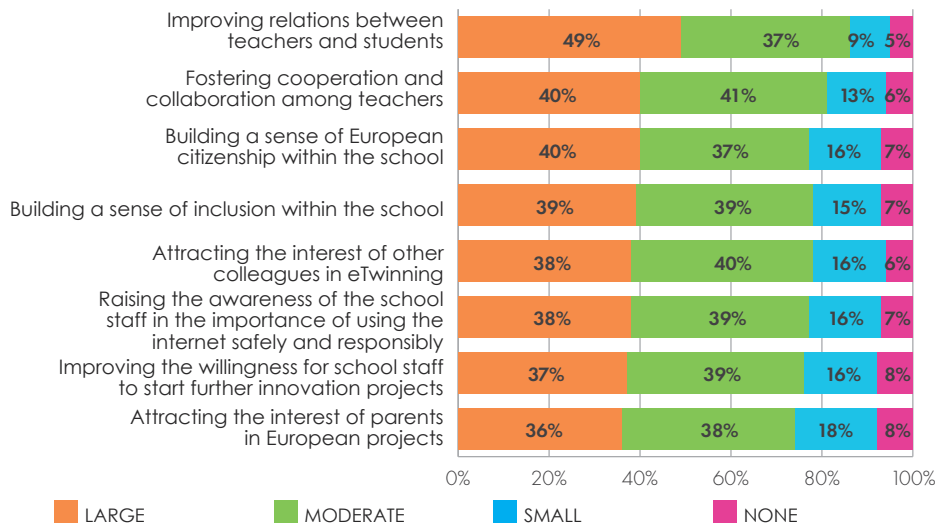
## 5. ETWINNING AND SCHOOLS

eTwinning teachers do not work in isolation, they work in an organisation, alongside groups of colleagues with a common aim, to educate the students in their care. In this section, the emphasis is on what the respondents perceive to be the effects that involvement eTwinning has on the work of the school as a whole.

The participants were asked to rate 8 statements according to the following question: 'Considering your current/previous eTwinning activities, what positive impact have they had on your school in the following ways?'

The results are presented in figure 8 below.

Figure 8: The effect of eTwinning on school activities – all respondents



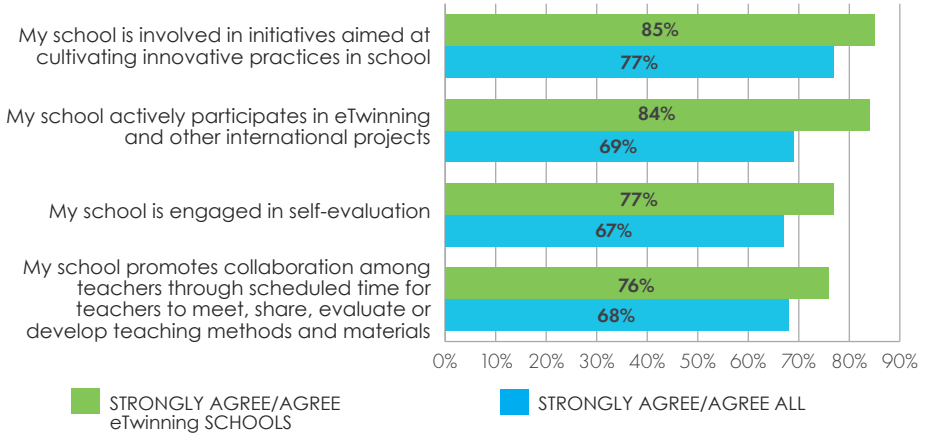
The first thing to note is the relatively small percentage of respondents who state that there has been no impact on any of the areas mentioned. With regard to the high figure (86%) of the improved relationship between teachers and students, it may be surmised that because students and teachers are getting on well together, negative attitudes diminish on both sides and perhaps teachers take on a less authoritarian role, acting more as guides and mentors. The next highest area is that of collaboration and cooperation with colleagues, as mentioned several times already. In the same area of working with colleagues, it is interesting to see that attracting the interest of other colleagues towards eTwinning is rated so highly (78%). Equally high rated is the building a sense of inclusion within the school, and the important issue of raising awareness about the responsible and safe use of the internet.

## 5.1. Comparing the effects of eTwinning in the Awarded eTwinning Schools v all respondents

While rewarding individual teachers for their eTwinning work has always been at the heart of the programme since the very beginning through the established eTwinning Quality Label and eTwinning Prizes, schools where eTwinning has been embedded into the core work of the school and its staff have not, until now, been officially recognised. To compliment the other forms of recognition, the eTwinning School label was introduced in 2017; it recognises the excellent work of schools who are deeply engaged in eTwinning, and also encourages these leading schools to become proactive in supporting other local schools, including those less advanced in eTwinning, to begin a developmental journey towards becoming an eTwinning School. The development of the eTwinning School concept is designed to act as an important mechanism in the future to help eTwinning reach out to school management and to other schools wishing to develop a team approach to eTwinning. In the following set of figures 9 to 11, we compare the responses of those respondents working in an awarded eTwinning School / all respondent in the following areas:

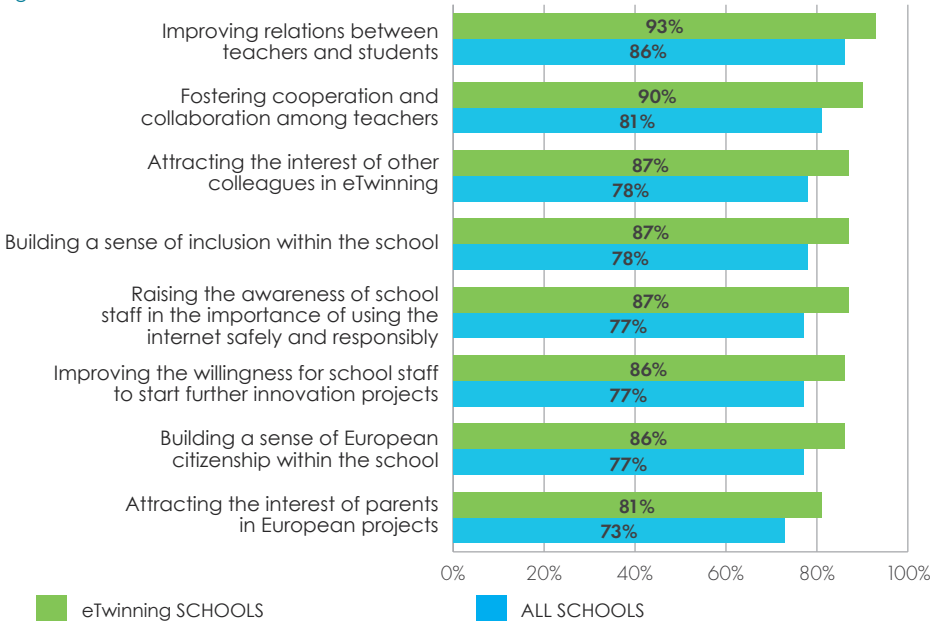
- School Climate
- Effect on whole school
- Most influential person or group.

Figure 9. School climate



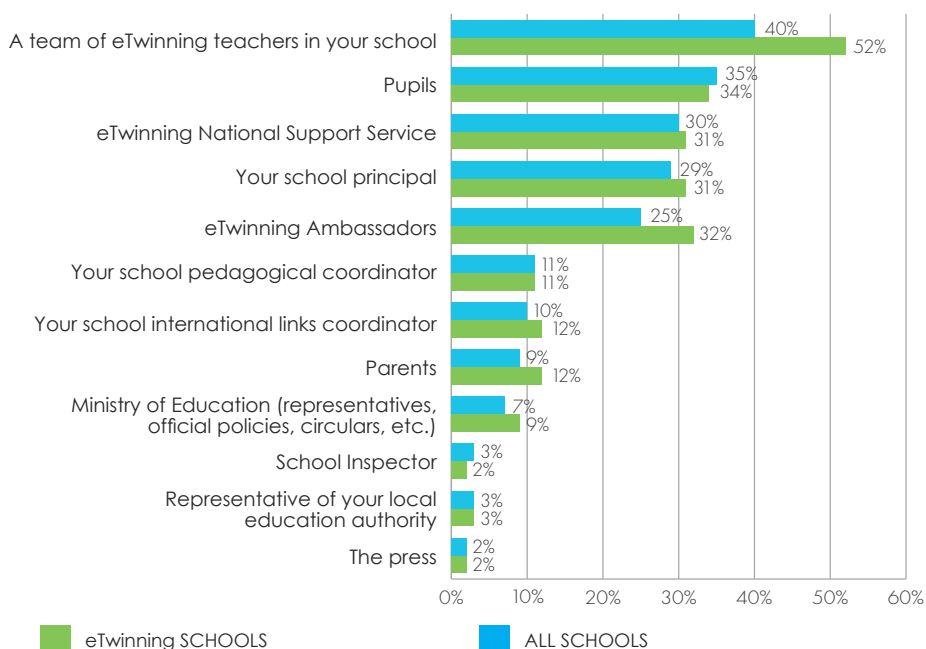
The climate of a school depends on many factors, school leadership practice, motivation of staff, commitment to school development among others. The fact that eTwinning Schools outscore the global respondents is hardly a surprise, but it does underscore the fact that these schools represent the possible achievement and influence of eTwinning at its best.

Figure 10: Effect on whole school



The same may be said here. All the positive effects of eTwinning are certainly present more strongly in all areas of school activity.

Figure 11: The most influential person or group in the school in relation to the development of eTwinning



In examining the results of the 2018 Monitoring survey it may be said that eTwinning is a real catalyst for change in individual teachers and in schools. Somehow, the nature of the eTwinning activities and the Community support those teachers who wish to change their practices, try out new ideas, develop their competences and work together as an educational team rather than isolated individuals. In the schools who have been awarded the eTwinning School Label the effect is seen more dramatically in all areas. It is interesting to note, particularly in figure 11, the most influential person or group is a team of teachers followed by pupils. This certainly **highlights the bottom up nature of eTwinning** and the strength of that influence, as it may be seen that the more traditional agencies in terms of top down approaches (Ministries, Inspectors Local authorities) score quite low in term of influence in the development of eTwinning in schools. That of course may be because Ministries have not got realised the potential of eTwinning as a means to be used to implement some areas of educational policy, a point followed up in the next chapter.



## 6. ETWINNING IN EDUCATIONAL POLICY

The results of this third edition of the monitoring survey confirm those of the previous editions; eTwinning teachers continue to report that **their involvement in eTwinning has a significant impact on the development of their pedagogical skills, technology and assessment skills**; they also report a significant **impact on students ability and motivation to learn** with an emphasis on competences such as collaborative decision making and team work. Also significant is the move beyond the work and influence of individual eTwinners to examining the effect of the whole school approach to eTwinning as reflected in the results from those schools awarded the eTwinning School Label. Here we see that with a solid leadership and a collaborative team approach within a school, that the positive effects of eTwinning on teachers and students is significantly higher in practically all areas.

What can be learned from this? It is worthwhile here to examine the results in the light of some of the policy recommendations from the recent TALIS 2018 report<sup>2</sup>. For this summary we focus on 3 particular policy goals mentioned in the TALIS 2018 report and examine how the results of the 2018 eTwinning Monitoring Report relate to them.

### 6.1. Goal: Promote the use of effective teaching practices

The TALIS 2018 report states that teachers implementing pedagogical practices such as “critical thinking, problem solving and decision making” which involve and give responsibilities to students not only encourage them to find creative and alternative ways to solve problems, but also enable them to communicate their thinking processes and results to their peers and teachers.

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2 OECD (2019), TALIS 2018 Results (Volume I): Teachers and School Leaders as Lifelong Learners, TALIS, OECD Publishing, Paris. <https://doi.org/10.1787/1d0bc92a-en>

The results of the 2018 monitoring report show that as a result of their involvement in eTwinning, teachers feel more confident in:

- Their ability to choose the right teaching strategy in any given situation
- Their ability to teach cross-curricular skills such as team-work, creativity, problem-solving, decision taking etc.
- Their project-based teaching skills.

They further report that:

- Their teaching is more based on students' competence development as much as their knowledge acquisition and retention
- Their focus is on students acquiring social, civic and/or intercultural competences
- They aim at enhancing students' critical thinking and media literacy to help build resistance to all forms of discrimination and indoctrination, especially via the internet and social media.

## 6.2. Goal: Foster openness towards innovation and effective use of ICT in teaching

“TALIS data suggest that there is limited preparation and support available for teachers that could enable them to implement innovative practices in their instruction”.

The TALIS report closely links the use of technology in teaching with the growth of innovative pedagogical practice. The results of the 2018 Monitoring report show that eTwinning teachers actively embrace technology in their teaching by:

- preparing and using digital presentations during lessons
- create their own digital learning materials for students
- collaboratively create new materials and resources with other colleagues.

Furthermore, they report that they create the environment where:

- Students use technology to collaborate in groupwork and project work
- Students use technology to learn at their own pace
- Students use ICT/multimedia/the internet for homework purposes.



### 6.3. Goal: Build the capacity of teachers and school leaders to meet the needs of diverse classrooms and schools

TALIS 2018 pays particular attention to multicultural diversity, where the integration of world economies and large-scale migration contributed to forming more ethnically, culturally and linguistically diverse and rich learning environments, creating the need for high-quality learning experiences for diverse student bodies.

The results of the 2018 Monitoring Survey show that eTwinning teachers use the eTwinning Community to:

- Ensure that they acquire social, civic and/or intercultural competences
- Promote intercultural dialogue through collaborative work among and between colleagues and learners at different levels
- Develop their competence to design and use a wide range of teaching strategies to meet the specific learning needs of learners of all abilities with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socio-economic backgrounds
- Provide students with opportunities to learn about and practice democratic values, social inclusion and/or active citizenship.

Bearing these results in mind, it may be said the eTwinning is a very useful and dynamic activity to be considered when looking for the means of implementing policy throughout schools in these particular areas. There are other policy areas highlighted by the TALIS report where eTwinning has something to offer and these may be seen in the full report.

Finally let us consider one of the policy pointers from the 2018 TALIS report that one of the most effective ways to bring about change is to “Build and promote professional learning communities to disseminate innovative practices” (P31).

It may be argued that this is exactly what eTwinning community does: it promotes professional development and exchange on innovative practice. Furthermore, with the advent of the eTwinning School Label, special emphasis is now given to the importance of the role of the school principal and the eTwinning in developing their schools as exemplar learning organisations.



## 7. FINAL POINTS

The 2018 eTwinning Monitoring survey results clearly shows the continuing success of eTwinning's **positive effect** on individual teachers and students as reported by the respondents. However, the results also highlight **the relevance of the introduction of the eTwinning School Label, targeting teams in schools, directly involving senior school management**. This is an important step to help ensure eTwinning is embedded more effectively at the level of the whole school strategy.

The additional cross analysis produced for this year's edition of the report illustrates **that the teachers and students in schools awarded the eTwinning School Label, significantly benefit from involvement in eTwinning**. The correlation analysis illustrates that teachers working in awarded eTwinning schools share their eTwinning practices more with other school staff than other respondents, and also consistently report eTwinning to have had more of a positive impact on various aspects at school level (such as **building a sense of European citizenship within the school**, fostering cooperation among teachers etc.) than teachers working in non-awarded schools.

From the results of teachers perception on the impact of eTwinning on their school, themselves and their students it may be concluded that **eTwinning has a positive effect not only in the educational areas of teaching and learning, but also at more profound levels in areas such as the development of a sense of identity, a growth in confidence in one's own abilities, the fostering of a sense of citizenship at both national and European level**, and a movement towards a greater ability to understand and cope with the complexities of multiculturalism and social change.





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