

Networked Teachers

Research report on eTwinning platform users



Home

Networked Teachers

Research report on eTwinning platform users

FRSE Research Reports 3/2021

Networked Teachers. Research report on eTwinning platform users

Authors: Jadwiga Fila, Mateusz Jeżowski, Michał Pachocki,
Agnieszka Rybińska, Monika Regulska, Bogdan Sot
Co-operation: Paweł Czaplinski, Małgorzata Knap, Dominika Tokarz

Translation: POLIGLOTA Biuro Tłumaczeń,
Barbara Jędraszko (Introduction, About eTwinning)



Proofreading: Dominika Tokarz,
Beata Maluchnik (Introduction, About eTwinning)

Production editor: Barbara Jędraszko

Design: Podpunkt

Cover design: Artur Ładno

DTP:  RZECZYOBRAZKOWE

Publisher: Foundation for the Development of the Education System
National Agency for the Erasmus+ Programme in Poland
National Agency for the European Solidarity Corps in Poland
Al. Jerozolimskie 142a, 02-305 Warsaw
 www.frse.org.pl | kontakt@frse.org.pl
 www.erasmusplus.org.pl

© Foundation for the Development of the Education System, Warsaw 2021

ISBN 978-83-66515-52-9

DOI: 10.47050/66515529

This publication has been developed with the financial support from the European Commission in the framework of the Erasmus+ programme. The information and views set out in this publication are those of the authors and the European Commission may not be held responsible for the use, which may be made of the information contained herein.

Free copy

Citation: Fila, J. et al. (2021). *Networked Teachers. Research report on eTwinning platform users*. Warsaw: Foundation for the Development of the Education System. doi: 10.47050/66515529

FRSE Publishing House periodicals and portals:

[języki: obce]
w szkole

europa
DLA AKTYWNYCH

europdesk
Polska

EUROPEJSKI
PORTAL MŁODZIEŻOWY

FRSE publications are available at:  www.czytelnia.frse.org.pl



Table of Contents

4	Introduction
6	About eTwinning
14	Survey scope and conditions
16	Methodology
20	Remote teaching
24	Digital skills and technological literacy
34	Remote teaching with eTwinning
46	Activity of the eTwinning National Support Service in the period from March to August 2020
62	Evaluation of the eTwinning platform
70	Remote teaching seen with the eyes of eTwinning ambassadors
96	Summary
100	Bibliography

Introduction



Home

The report presents the results of the first eTwinning user survey carried out at an exceptional time: the COVID-19 pandemic, immediately after the end of the 2019/2020 school year. Therefore, in addition to the survey results, the publication includes eTwinning ambassadors' comments on ways they coped with remote teaching in this difficult time as well as on the implementation of eTwinning online projects and on the way it has affected their knowledge of online tools and their digital competencies.

When the European Commission launched the eTwinning programme in 2005, the main objective of this initiative was to create schools' international partnerships and their virtual co-operation. Over time, eTwinning has also become a platform for teachers to train and develop their competencies, as well as find innovative teaching methods and work inspiration.

Teachers gathered in the eTwinning community are reluctant to use the term "modern technologies in education". For them, using online tools, e.g. creating films with students, preparing quizzes or online knowledge tests, is not a sign of modernity, but their everyday life. Therefore, the authors of this report were curious how this "everyday life", understood as the familiarity with information and communication technologies (ICT) and the use of them, proved successful in the era of remote teaching and whether teachers using ICT tools on a daily basis were prepared for this unprecedented challenge.

Authors

About eTwinning



Home

Launched in 2005 as the main action of the European Commission's eLearning Programme, eTwinning is funded from the Commission's budget through the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) in the frame of the Erasmus+, the European Union's programme to support education, training, youth initiatives and sports. The aim of eTwinning is to create a European co-operation network for schools that gives them an opportunity to conduct joint educational projects and activities via the Internet and other modern information and communication technologies (ICT).

Since the programme was launched, the eTwinning community involved more than 820,000 teachers from all over Europe, working for almost 208,000 schools that have completed over 108,000 projects by the time the research was conducted¹.

The main principle of eTwinning is co-operation and it takes place as a part of international and national projects aimed at, for example, enabling young people to develop their language skills. The students involved in eTwinning projects create teams, set project goals together and determine ways to achieve them. They are also obliged to share project results in order to motivate others to continue their education. For teachers, eTwinning projects are, inter alia, an opportunity for innovative and creative use of ICT technologies in activities carried on in co-operation with their colleagues and while working with students at all levels.

eTwinning is also a digital platform at www.etwinning.net, in 28 European languages, coordinated and developed by the eTwinning Central Support Service (CSS), led by the European Schoolnet, a consortium of 32 ministries of education from European countries. The eTwinning platform is partially open to the public, but also has functionalities for logged-in users only. The public part of the platform provides information on advantages of eTwinning projects and on possibilities to get involved in them. The eTwinning Live platform for logged-in users serves as a virtual space for project co-operation, which also gives teachers an opportunity for professional development, both in Poland and abroad. Teachers implementing eTwinning projects can also collaborate in the TwinSpace, i.e. in the Home space available only to a closed group of users.

Each country participating in eTwinning initiative has its national eTwinning agency called National Support Service (NSS)², responsible for coordinating and developing the programme as well as for its promoting and for monitoring

1 Data for the end of March 2020. At the moment, the eTwinning community comprises of over 928,000 teachers (and this number increases by over 1,000 every week), of almost 217,000 schools and of over 120,000 projects.

2 Currently National Support Organisation (NSO).

its activities. The office also supports teachers involved in eTwinning projects and enables them in-country professional development. The eTwinning national agencies collaborate with the central office that, in addition to running the platform, organizes annual European eTwinning conferences and galas during which teachers and students are awarded for outstanding projects.

The activities of the NSO in Poland are focused primarily on organising information conferences, training workshops and online courses as well as supporting school activities, monitoring project quality, and collecting and disseminating good practices. The Polish office also runs the national portal www.etwinning.pl and eTwinning Polska profiles on Facebook and Twitter.

Between 2005 and 2020³ over 71,000 users registered on the eTwinning platform. The highest increase of registrations has been observed since 2015, mainly due to the intensification of activities promoting the eTwinning programme in Poland.

So far, 71,990 teachers and 18,327 educational institutions have used the platform, including 9,523 primary schools, 3,543 school groups, 1,288 vocational schools, 1,028 general secondary schools and 2,441 kindergartens. By the end of August 2020, 33,297 international school projects were implemented in total.

Table 1. Number of teachers, schools and projects carried out within eTwinning in Poland

	teachers	schools	projects
2005	1,140	762	254
2006	1,862	1,219	747
2007	2,026	1,271	1,054
2008	2,141	1,091	1,175
2009	2,175	927	1,572
2010	2,480	1,066	1,575
2011	2,996	1,104	1,543
2012	3,949	1,306	1,896
2013	4,701	1,084	2,094
2014	4,468	983	2,251
2015	5,918	1,106	2,477
2016	6,452	1,105	2,976
2017	7,591	1,347	3,881
2018	9,593	1,413	3,870

³ Data for August 2020.

2019	9,575	1,672	4,320
2020*	4,923	872	1,612

* Data for August 2020.

Source: own work based on the eTwinning platform data.

Table 2. Number of schools registered on the eTwinning platform by type*

type of school	number of schools	share in %
primary schools (including former lower secondary schools)	9,523	51.96
groups of schools (excluding vocational schools and groups of vocational schools)	3,543	19.33
groups of general secondary schools	988	5.39
groups of schools and kindergartens	1,560	8.51
other groups of schools	995	5.43
kindergartens	2,441	13.32
general secondary schools	1,028	5.61
vocational schools (groups of vocational schools: trade schools – formerly vocational and technical schools)	1,288	7.03
special needs schools	132	0.72
care and education centres	205	1.12
other	167	0.91

* The list also includes 31 Polish schools operating abroad, which are registered on the eTwinning platform.

Source: own work based on the eTwinning platform data.

From the geographic perspective, schools operating in the Śląskie and Mazowieckie provinces are the most numerous. There are 5,200 schools active in the programme in the two provinces, which forms nearly 28% of Polish institutions registered on the platform. Also schools operating in the Małopolskie and Wielkopolskie provinces are active eTwinners (about 17% of registered schools in total). Moreover, schools in the Dolnośląskie, Podkarpackie and Łódzkie provinces have a strong representation in the programme (over 1,000 schools).

Map 1. Number of schools registered on the eTwinning platform by province



Source: own work based on the eTwinning platform data.

Educational institutions located in cities form nearly 69% of all entities registered on the eTwinning platform, and institutions from rural areas stand for over 31%. This division is very similar to the proportions for the total number of schools and educational institutions in Poland; 68% of which are located in cities and 32% in rural areas⁴. Among schools and kindergartens in cities, the most numerous are those in localities with a population varying from 15,000 to 100,000 inhabitants. The second most numerous group are schools located in cities with a population varying from 100,000 to one million inhabitants. It is worth noting that more than 2.5% of schools registered in eTwinning are located in cities with less than 3,000 inhabitants, while only about 1% of Polish population lives there.

4 For the 2018/2019 school year, according to the data of Polish Register of Schools and Educational Institutions, www.rspo.men.gov.pl.

Table 3. Educational institutions registered on the eTwinning platform by locality

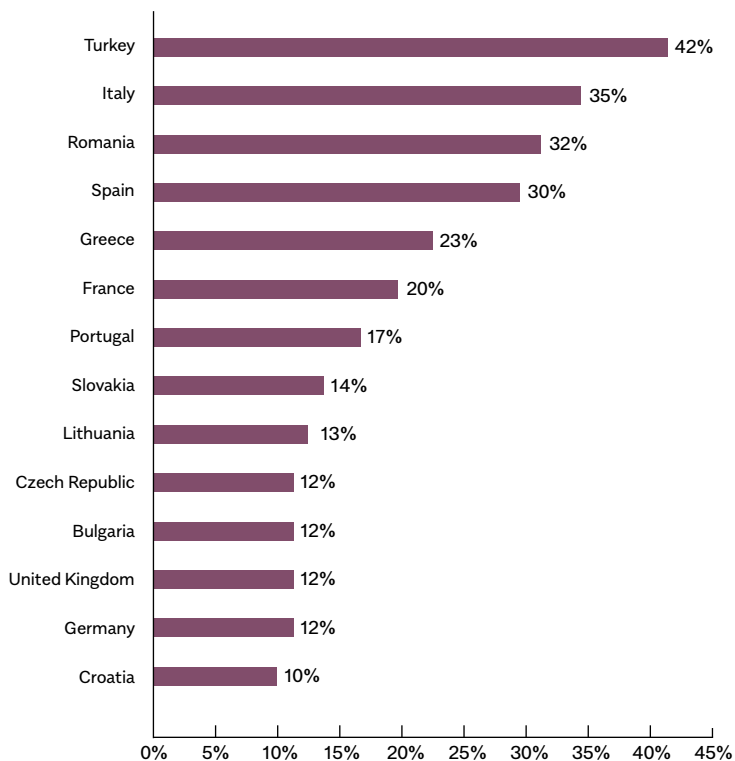
locality type	number of schools	share in %
villages	5,698	31.14
cities/towns	12,599	68.86
with more than 1 million inhabitants	954	5.21
with population ranging from 100,000 to 1 million	4,475	24.46
with population ranging from 15,000 to 100,000	4,554	24.89
with population ranging from 3,000 to 15,000	2,144	11.72
with population smaller than 3,000 inhabitants	472	2.58

Source: own work based on the eTwinning platform data.

Polish kindergartens and schools usually co-operate with partners from 14 countries. The figure on the next page shows the total number of projects and countries with which cooperation is conducted as part of more than 10% of projects implemented by Polish institutions. Turkey takes the first place. Institutions from this country are partners for Polish schools in 42% of projects. Italy (35%) Romania (32%) and Spain (30%) come next. Croatia (10%) completes the list of partner countries involved in at least 10% of the projects.

Figure 1. The main eTwinning project partner countries for Polish institutions

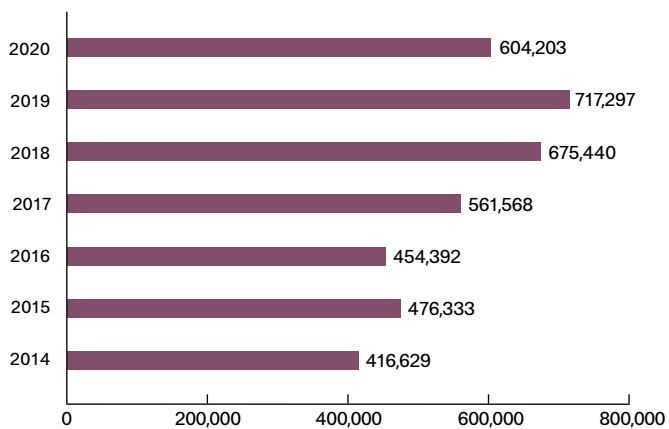
Percentage of projects by country



Source: own work based on the eTwinning platform data.

Between 2014 and 2020, the total number of pageview hits on www.etwinning.pl came close to four million. Starting from 2017, an annual increase in the number of hits can be observed, with the hitherto record result in 2019, when the number of visits on the website exceeded 700,000.

Figure 2. Number of pageviews on the www.etwinning.pl website in 2014–2020



* Data for 31 August 2020.

Source: own work based on the eTwinning platform data.

Survey scope and conditions



Home

The survey was designed in relation to the sudden outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in the world and in Poland. The implementation of obligatory remote-teaching to Polish schools and kindergartens starting from March 2020 confronted headteachers, teachers, students and their parents with completely new challenges and problems. Schools had to switch to online teaching and the level of preparedness of the teaching staff for this varied greatly. Some teachers had been using distance learning techniques and tools for years. To them the work during the pandemic seemed to be relatively less challenging. However, for many educators, the situation was very difficult, as some of them had to conduct online classes for the first time in their professional career.

The aim of the survey was to examine if and how the eTwinning platform had contributed to supporting teachers in their remote teaching during the pandemic time. It was also an attempt to identify the main challenges and difficulties for the teachers at that time and to become acquainted with their opinions on this form of passing on knowledge to students. The survey was also conducted to examine how the implementation of international projects using the virtual platform influenced digital competencies of teachers and their use of various online tools. In addition, areas and functionalities of the eTwinning platform most useful to teachers were identified and analysed.

Methodology



Home

Research areas and questions

Quantitative data was collected using Computer-Assisted Web Interview (CAWI) technique, taking the form of an online questionnaire sent to teachers, and later analysed. The respondents were headteachers and teachers of schools and kindergartens registered as users of the eTwinning platform.

The survey identified three study areas, and in each one of them several main research questions were asked. In the last part of the survey, sample data was collected.

Area I: eTwinning platform – familiarity with the platform and the use of its resources

Main research questions:

1. How often do teachers use the eTwinning platform and which of its elements do they use?
2. Which of the platform's resources do teachers find most useful?
3. Did the teachers use the platform resources in a different way during the COVID-19 pandemic than before? What has changed?

Area III: Remote learning in a time of COVID-19

Main research questions:

1. How do teachers assess their performance in the context of remote teaching? What can they do? What poses a challenge to them?
2. What tools and programmes do teachers use to teach remotely?
3. What do teachers lack most when teaching online?

Area II: Digital competencies of teachers

Main research questions:

1. What is the level of teachers' digital competencies and skills?
Do they develop these competencies and related skills?
How do they do that? Do they use them in school/kindergarten work?
2. Where do teachers find information on how to use modern technologies in teaching?
3. How do teachers evaluate the introduction of modern technologies to the teaching process? Do they see it as an opportunity or as a threat?

Survey tool, survey sample and data collection

The survey was conducted from 27 July to 17 August 2020. Its questionnaire consisted of 22 questions. The majority of them were single- or multiple-choice closed questions and scaled-response questions. One of the questions concerned the NPS¹ metric. At the end of the questionnaire there was also an open question, where the respondents could express their opinions².

The questions in the survey were divided into the three areas mentioned above in order to obtain answers to all research questions presented.

The average time needed to complete the questionnaire was 13 minutes.

All registered eTwinning users who have logged on to the eTwinning platform at least once in the past three years were invited to participate in the survey. The sample was exhaustive and included 38,519 users. The survey invitation was sent by e-mail, featuring a link to the questionnaire.

First, invitations were sent to a group of 18,826 users with active accounts (actively using the eTwinning platform). Two weeks later, invitations to the survey were sent to the second study group: 19,693 registered users who had not been active on the platform recently. Next, a reminder about the survey was sent to the first group of respondents.

Table 1. Survey sample in the quantitative study

	number of sent invitations
group of active users	18,826
group of inactive users	19,693
TOTAL	38,519

Source: own work based on eTwinning users data.

- 1 NPS (Net Promoter Score) is a popular metric for assessing user loyalty, often used in marketing research, as well as for customer satisfaction surveys.
- 2 This question was very popular among the respondents, who provided as many as 212 full answers to it.

To maximise the response rate, the invitation to participate in the survey has also been featured twice in the eTwinning platform newsletter, which is sent to 6,300 subscribers. In addition, a link to the survey was also posted on the programme website www.etwinning.pl, on the eTwinning Polska Facebook profile and on the eTwinning Live platform (available for registered users only).

A total of **1,790 respondents** completed the questionnaire. The survey was mainly addressed to active users of the eTwinning platform, therefore it included an initial filter question about the frequency of the platform use. If the answer "I do not use eTwinning" was ticked, the survey was closed and the remaining questions were not asked. In the group of respondents, less than 9.5% (169 people) marked the above option and thus completed the survey.

Therefore all further analyses concern only respondents who use the eTwinning platform at least occasionally. This group consisted of **1,621 people**.

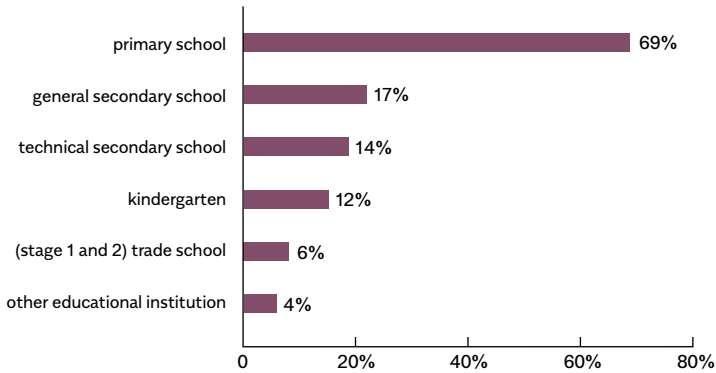
Survey sample description



Home

The vast majority of respondents are primary school teachers. The second most numerous group are general secondary school teachers.

Figure 1. The respondent is a teacher working at a(n)... (N = 1790)

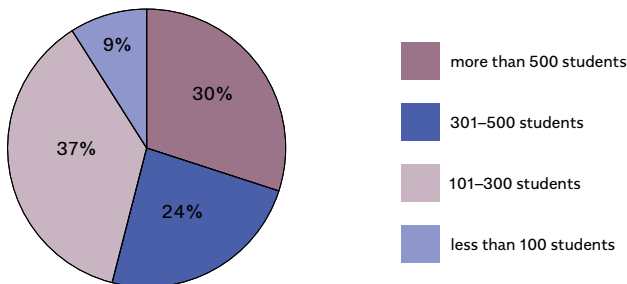


Source: own work.

In the survey, all types of localities where the schools of the respondents are based, were practically represented equally – both the smallest ones (with less than 3,000 inhabitants) and large cities with up to one million residents¹. The least numerous group are teachers working in cities with a population exceeding one million inhabitants (141 respondents).

The most numerous group of respondents are teachers who work at average-sized schools (from 100 to 300 students). 30% of the respondents are teachers working at large schools, those with over 500 students.

Figure 2. How many students attend the school where the respondent works? (N = 1621)



Source: own work.

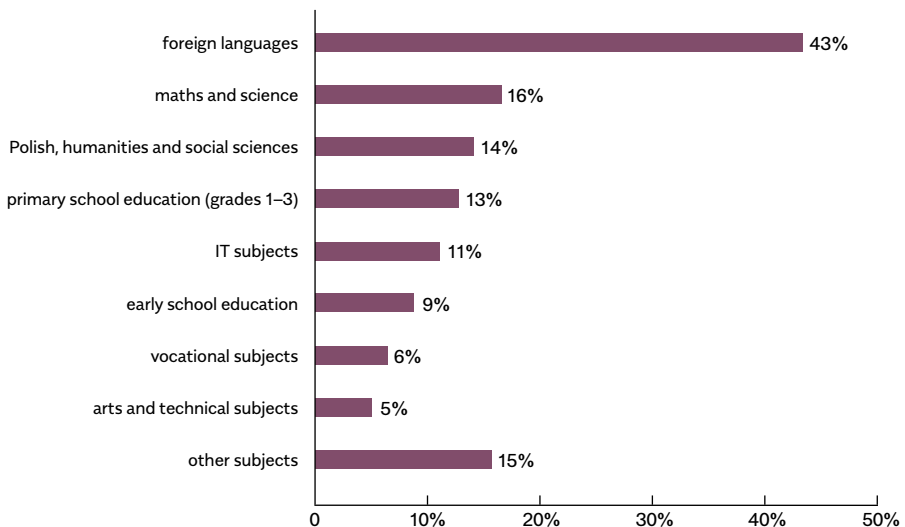
1 Between 332 and 400 responses were recorded in each category (N = 1621).

As far as professional experience is concerned, teachers who worked for more than five years formed the most numerous group. The largest group (37%) were teachers with working experience from 16 to 25 years. The second group worked at school for more than 25 years (30%) and for 5 to 15 years (29%).

Among the survey participants, foreign language teachers predominated. They constituted 43% of the respondents. This is related to the purpose of the eTwinning platform, which has been designed to carry out international projects with educational institutions from abroad.

It is worth noting that early childhood and pre-school education teachers were also well represented (204 and 140 respondents respectively). This shows that the eTwinning platform can also offer support to teachers who work with the youngest children.

Figure 3. Subjects taught by the respondent (N = 1621)

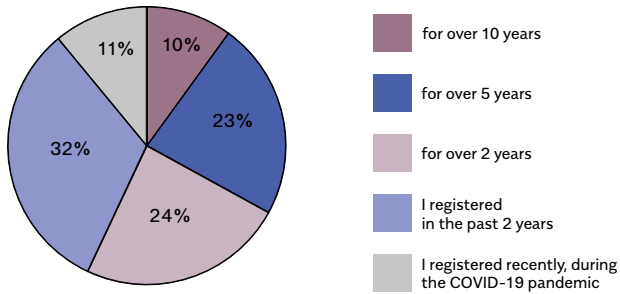


Source: own work.

What is particularly important in the context of the topic of the survey, is the fact that the vast majority of teachers who filled in the questionnaire had been actively using modern technologies to teach classes for a long time. Over 60% of the respondents indicated that they had been using modern technologies in their work for over 5 years. Only 90 respondents (5%) have been using modern technologies in teaching for less than six months.

Almost $\frac{1}{3}$ of the respondents have been registered users of the eTwinning platform over the past 2 years. About 10% of respondents have used the platform for more than 10 years. A similar group (almost 11%) admitted that they registered on the platform during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the respondent group is very diverse. The number of teachers who have been using the platform's resources for years is similar to that of novice users.

Figure 4. For how long has the respondent been a registered user of the eTwinning platform? (N = 1790)



Source: own work.

Remote teaching

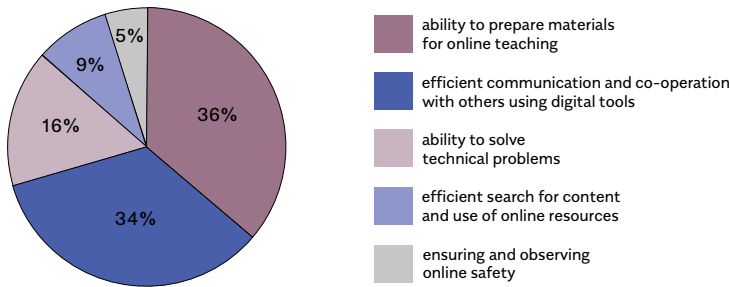


Home

An important element of the study was the assessment of individual aspects of remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic by users of the eTwinning platform. Questions asked to teachers in this respect concerned mainly such aspects as the implementation of core curriculum, evaluation of online tools supporting remote teaching, and assessment of students' progress.

According to the surveyed users of the eTwinning platform, the factors impacting efficient course of remote teaching include the ability to prepare teaching materials for online work (36.1% of responses) and efficient communication and cooperation with others using digital tools (34.3% of responses). Slightly less frequently, the respondents indicated the ability to solve technical problems (16%) and efficient search for content and use of online resources (8.6%). No significant differences were observed between the responses of novice and experienced eTwinning users.

Figure 1. What element impacts most the smooth course of remote teaching? (N = 1621)

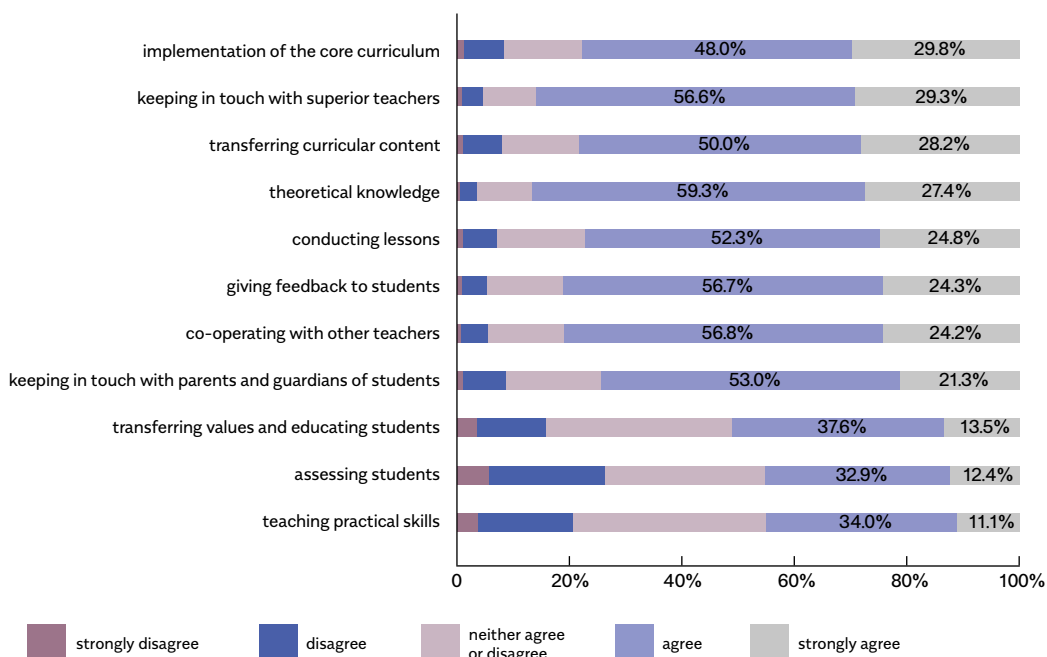


Source: own work.

When asked with what they coped best during remote teaching, the respondents most often reported that they had no problems with sharing theoretical knowledge, keeping in touch with superiors, giving feedback to students and cooperating with other teachers, as well as with implementing the core curriculum and transferring the curricular content. Absence of problems in implementing the core curriculum was most often declared by respondents from kindergartens (80.2%) and primary schools (79%). The group which most often admitted to having problems in this area were respondents working at trade schools (12.5%).

According to the respondents, the most challenging were: the transfer of practical skills (this answer was indicated by every fourth technical and high school teacher), assessment of students' work (problems were signalled by 31.3% of secondary school teachers, 26.9% of primary school teachers and slightly more than 23% of technical and secondary school teachers) and transferring values and educating students (here, problems were reported by every fifth general and technical secondary school teacher).

Figure 2. When teaching remotely, I had no problem with... (N = 1621)



Source: own work.

This is also reflected in teachers' responses to open questions, where they most often signalled problems resulting from a lack of contact with students – and especially those related to assessing their progress, verifying the acquired knowledge and cooperating with parents.

School is not a place where knowledge is transferred. It is a place where, through contact with young people, we teach them how to live. We pass on to them values, we show them what is important. Remote teaching does not allow for that. I like working online, but it is not the same as face-to-face contact with the students.

I definitely prefer to teach conventionally at school. I think it is the most reliable and honest method for all. Besides, I miss my students.

According to various studies carried out during the pandemic, a significant proportion of the teaching staff complained about problems related to the assessment of students' work as part of remote learning (Plebańska, Szyller and Sieńczewska 2020; Biernat 2020; Amielańczyk, Michniuk and Śliwowski 2020). Some of the studies (Plebańska, Szyller and Sieńczewska 2020) carried out at the time of remote teaching show that according to the surveyed teachers the lack of possibility to control students, to verify the independence of their work, as well as difficulties in motivating them to be active in classes are the greatest risk related to online education. This aspect also surfaced in the statements of eTwinning users who pointed out that parents or older siblings were too helpful in online tests and homework. Therefore any assistance related to the possibilities of using tools to assess students' performance seems to be desirable, including training on giving feedback and formative assessment, and materials available to the public.

We lack tools to verify skills and knowledge.

Online teaching was not difficult for me, but verifying if the knowledge was acquired by the students was definitely a challenge.

I need strict rules to carry out the assessment efficiently.

Other difficulties reported concerned problems with hardware and software, which some of the respondents had to buy with their own funds. The negative impact of remote teaching on teachers' family situation was also often mentioned. Some of them pointed out the lack of suitable conditions at home to teach classes remotely.

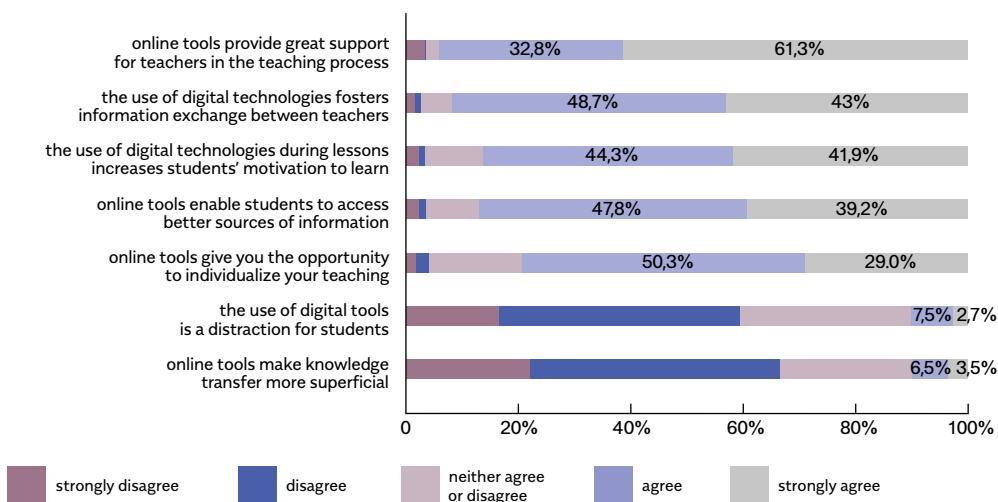
Unfortunately, the schools did not provide teachers with hardware to teach remotely, because the schools do not have adequate equipment resources.



It put a mental and physical strain on me. It affected my family.

The vast majority of respondents registered on the eTwinning platform (94.1% of the responses were affirmative) agreed with the statement that online tools provide them with great support in the teaching process. There are no significant differences in the responses of teachers working at various types of institutions: most often, teachers working in kindergartens (94.8%) and primary schools (94.8%) agreed with this statement, and least often, teachers working at technical secondary (91.6%) and trade schools (91.6%) agreed with it. Slightly more than 90% of those surveyed also said that the use of digital technologies fostered the exchange of information between teachers, and more than 85% agreed that digital technologies used during classes increased students' motivation to learn. It is worth noting, however, that every third respondent was not able to say definitely if digital technologies are a distraction for the students, and almost every fourth of them if they make knowledge transferred more superfluous. At the same time, the majority of teachers working at technical secondary (16.3%) and general secondary schools (12.2%) agreed with these two statements. The vast majority of the respondents agreed that online tools enable students to access better sources of information.

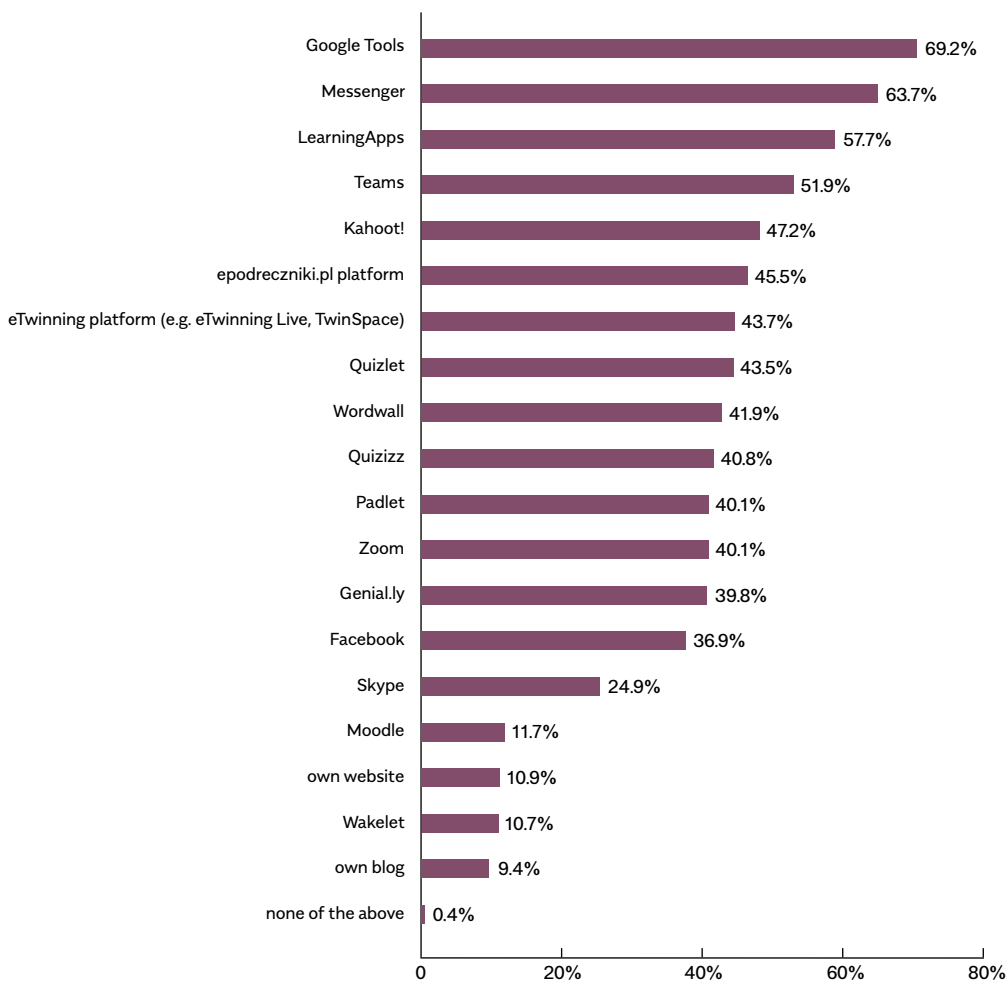
Figure 3. Do you agree with the following statements? (N = 1621)



Source: own work.

During remote teaching the tools most frequently used by the respondents who are the eTwinning platform users were Google tools (69.2% of responses) and the Messenger messaging application (63.7%). Also tools designed to activate students, such as Quizlet, Wordwall and Padlet – were very popular with 43.5%, 41.9% and 40.1% of respondents respectively. Respondents relatively rarely used Skype messaging application or Moodle platform. It is noteworthy that on average every tenth respondent declared using their own website or blog for remote education. There are no significant differences between beginner and experienced eTwinners, but certain preferences for particular tools in particular types of schools can be observed. For example, the Teams platform and Google tools are the most popular among technical secondary school teachers, Genial.ly and LearningApps among kindergarten and primary school teachers, and Quizizz was the most often used in general secondary schools.

Figure 4. I use the following tools for remote teaching (N = 1621)



Source: own work.

When asked what they lacked most in remote teaching, teachers registered on the eTwinning platform, most often mentioned direct contact with students. In open answers, they sometimes suggested that remote teaching was effective, but only as a complement to traditional teaching. To a much lesser extent, teachers lacked tools to control work and verify students' progress or technical support. The respondents did not complain about the lack of contact with other

teachers or parents of their students. Mostly teachers working at kindergartens (8.8% of responses) lacked technical support, and the smallest proportion of teachers working at technical secondary schools (4.4%) lacked such a support. On the other hand, teachers working at technical secondary schools most often lacked tools to control work and verify students' progress (15% of responses).

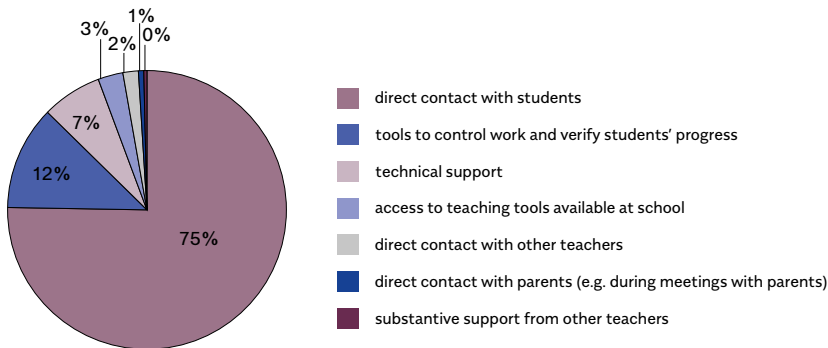


Nothing can replace direct contact between the student and the teacher.



Remote teaching should support traditional teaching. Students need other students and the teacher. Remote teaching is only a substitute for school. My students and I miss school events, music during breaks, coffee in the school canteen etc. When we go back to school, I will kiss the blackboard.

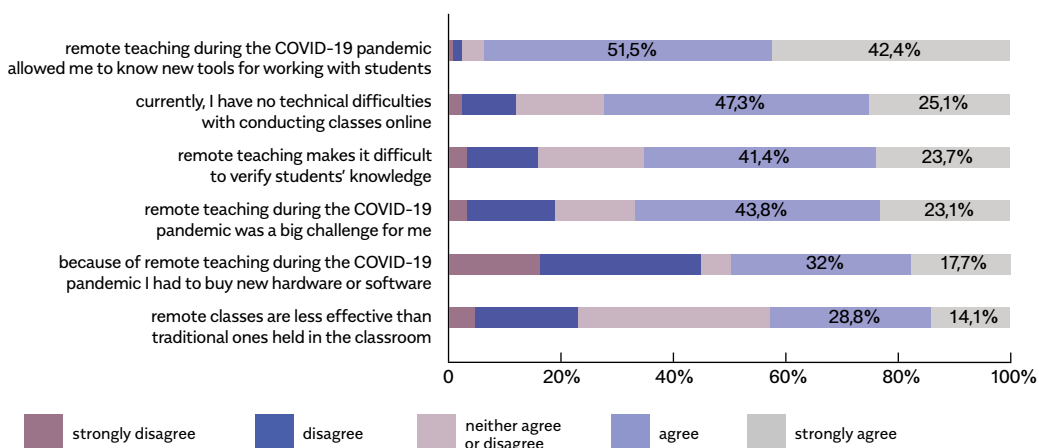
Figure 5. What I miss most in remote teaching is... (N = 1621)



Source: own work.

The vast majority of surveyed teachers (93.9% of responses) agreed that remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic allowed them to learn new tools for working with students. Three quarters of them also admitted that they did not have technical difficulties with conducting remote classes (72.4%) – experienced eTwinners had problems in this respect least frequently. However, a similar percentage of respondents (65.1%) stated that remote teaching made it difficult to verify students' knowledge. To nearly 67% of the surveyed teachers, remote teaching was a big challenge. At the same time, one in three of them (57.1%) was not able to clearly assess whether remote classes were less effective than traditional lessons in the classroom.

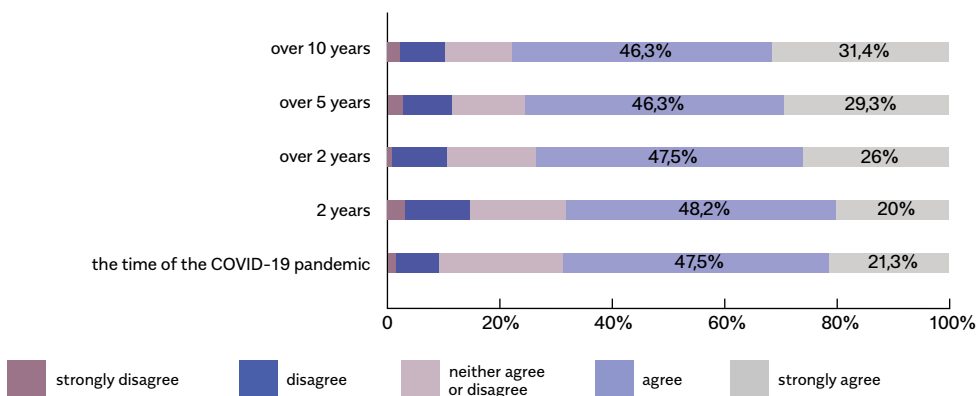
Figure 6. Do you agree with the following statements? (N = 1621)



Source: own work.

Figure 7. Currently, I do not have any technical difficulties with conducting remote classes (N = 1621)*

I have been using the eTwinning platform for...



* Answers depending on the experience with using the eTwinning platform.

Source: own work.

Teachers of technical subjects and those who worked with students with special educational needs usually reported their lack of satisfaction with remote teaching.

Remote teaching does not allow for teaching practical classes. In technical occupations, this is a huge loss and an insurmountable difficulty. We cannot stage practical training and courses, go to universities or to workplaces. Due to the lack of textbooks and exercise books for vocational subjects and the lack of sufficient online resources, preparing materials for classes requires a lot of work from the teacher.

Remote teaching requires much more work and time, especially from teachers working at special needs schools. We have no materials, no manuals, no websites in Polish.

The teachers participating in the survey also mentioned that the variety of available tools (including applications and software) for remote teaching often proved to be not so much a support, but a considerable obstacle in working with students during the COVID-19 pandemic. The problems stemmed mainly from the fact that teachers working at the same school used different tools and these tools were not compatible. The respondents postulated that the development of a single platform for remote teaching, which would also be used to assess students' progress in distance learning, would make their work easier.

There is no possibility to use online tools on one platform.

One platform for the whole school is a reasonable solution.

In this context, the need for cooperation between teachers in a given school was also pointed out, as well as for close cooperation with parents of students. It was stressed that the involvement of all stakeholder groups mainly determined the qualitative implementation of remote teaching in Polish educational institutions.

Remote teaching can prove successful only if teachers, students and parents work closely together.

We lack a uniform system of remote learning (different teachers use different tools, which results in more chaos for students and parents), and it is rather straightforward.

It is always worth testing work tools, platforms, quizzes, activities before the lesson, e.g. with another teacher and check how they work from the student's perspective. It is worth checking if they work on different devices and operating systems.

Digital skills and technological literacy



Home

One of important factors determining the qualitative implementation of teaching using modern technologies is the level of digital competencies of teachers. Therefore, in order to determine the level and quality of digital preparedness of eTwinning platform users, it seems reasonable to identify the main sources from which they acquire their knowledge of new technologies in education, to estimate their level of digital competencies and to determine the level of support provided by their home educational institutions in the use of modern technologies in the implementation of teaching programmes.

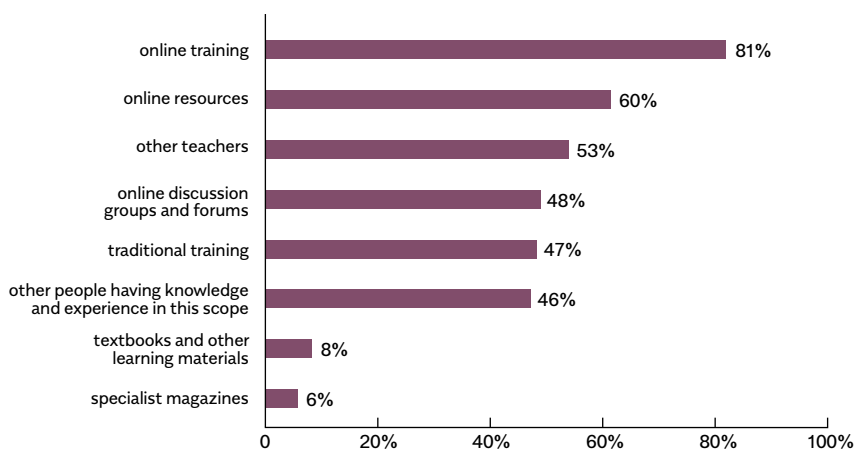
Sources of knowledge about new technologies

The results of the study show that eTwinners draw knowledge about new technologies used in education primarily from online sources. The vast majority of respondents admitted that the best source of knowledge about the use of modern technologies in education are training sessions organised online (over 80% of respondents), and resources available on the Internet. The respondents also willingly use the help of other teachers (more than 53% of responses). They attend online forums and discussion groups (more than 48% of responses).

Taking into account the opinions of respondents, the smallest percentage of positive statements concerned traditional sources of information such as textbooks and other learning materials (more than 8% of declarations) and specialist magazines (less than 6% of responses). This means that eTwinners seem to be much more inclined to use new media and direct contacts to seek information on modern teaching methods.

Figure 1. Sources of knowledge about new technologies in education used by eTwinners (N = 1621)*

The best source of knowledge about the use of modern technologies in education is...



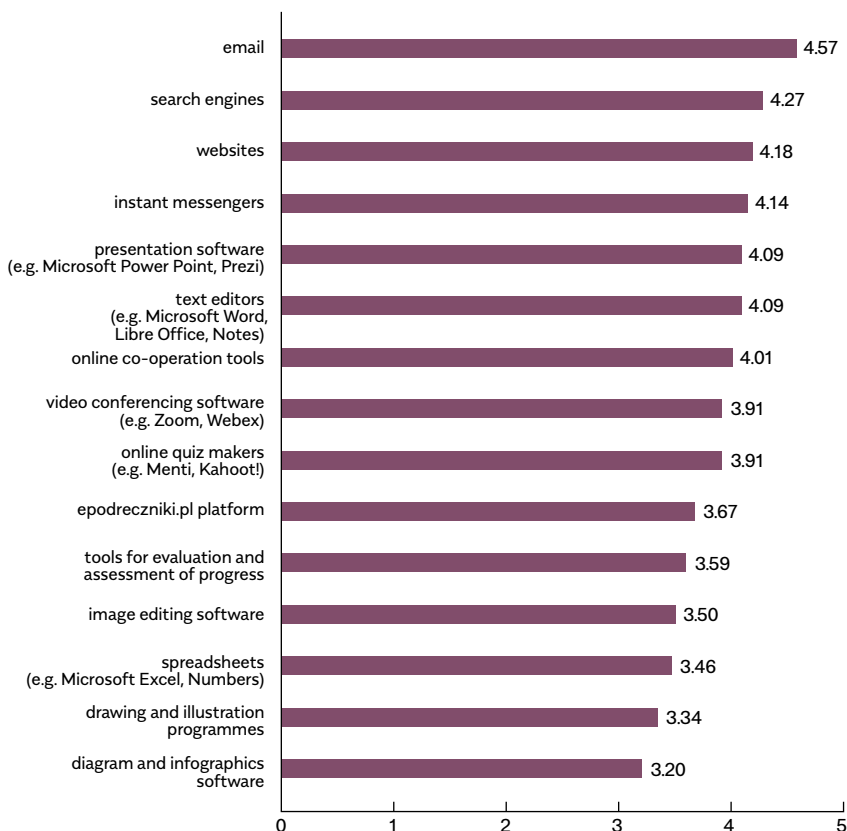
* The figure shows the percentage of respondents who agreed with the statement.

Source: own work.

Digital competencies

The results of the survey show that teachers using the eTwinning portal think highly about their digital competencies (the average score, on a scale from 1 to 5, is 3.86). Respondents gave the highest score to the skills that were directly related to Internet use. They assessed most positively the skills related to the use of email (average score is 4.57). The surveyed eTwinners declared that they had no problems with using search engines (average score of 4.27), resources available on websites (average score of 4.18) and instant messengers (average score of 4.14).

Figure 2. Declared digital competencies of the surveyed eTwinners (N = 1621)*

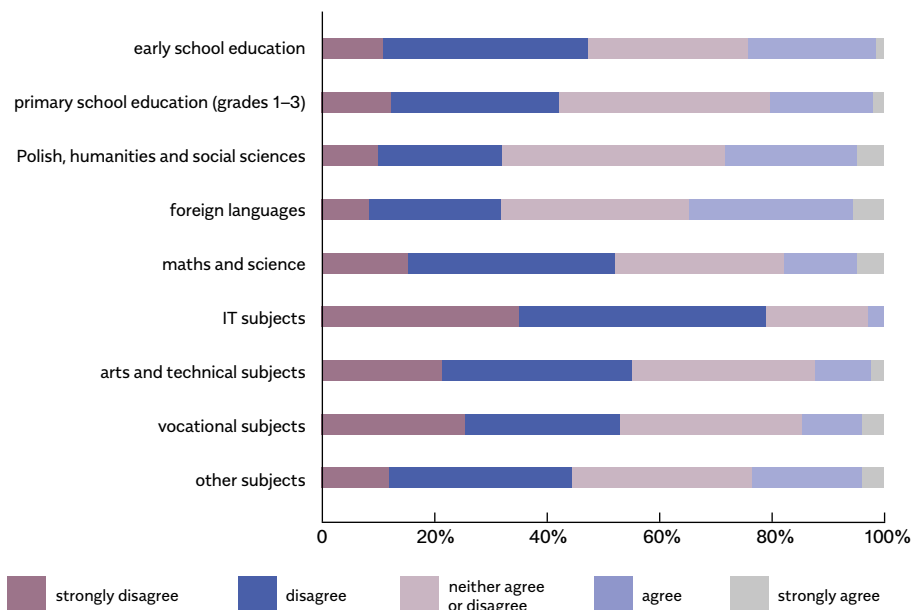


* The figure shows the average value for self-assessment of individual competencies, based on a five-point rating scale.
Source: own work.

The lowest declared level of competencies (although also in these cases self-assessment score remained above 3) concerned the ability to use diagram and infographics software (average score of 3.20), spreadsheets (average score of 3.46), and drawing and illustration programmes (average score of 3.34) and image editing software (average score of 3.50). It is worth noting, however, that the types of software mentioned above are related to specific fields of education and therefore often prove useful in teaching some, but not all, school subjects. The first two types of software concern mainly mathematics and science (STEM subjects), while the latter two seem to be much more frequently used in teaching humanities and arts.

Figure 3. Declared digital competencies of the surveyed eTwinners (N = 1621)*

I have good digital competencies in...



* The figure shows the percentage distribution of answers among teachers of particular subjects.

Source: own work.

In the opinion of respondents, eTwinning is a good tool for improving teachers' digital competencies and the experience gained on the platform has a direct impact on both ICT literacy and the effective use of tools and applications for teaching online.

Thanks to many training events offered by the eTwinning platform, I was able to diversify remote teaching with the use of different ICT tools and improve my digital competencies.

Thanks to eTwinning, I became familiar with the tools that helped me teach my classes, made them more attractive and this way contributed to my professional development.

Many respondents stressed that eTwinning proved to be a reliable source of knowledge on distance learning and that the training offer available on the platform was useful for teaching remotely during the pandemic. Some eTwinners emphasised the importance of experience gained while implementing projects and getting to know teachers from other countries from whom they could learn how to use new technologies.

I have been teaching remotely for a couple of years now, so it was not a technical challenge for me. I teach Polish, so the challenge was to make the lessons interesting and effective. It is important that students have the feeling that they are learning and are in touch with the teacher. Any new idea is welcome. I really like eTwinning online events.

Thanks to my involvement in eTwinning projects, I learned about many valuable tools that I have successfully used in remote teaching.

In this context, there were also declarations of respondents who explicitly said that they had no problems with remote teaching thanks to previous activity in eTwinning. They stressed that they could not only use the knowledge, but also teaching materials developed during the training courses posted on the platform.

I am aware of future challenges and I have no problems with preparing and teaching classes online. For a teacher, it is an excellent form of professional development.

And it benefits children, parents, the school and even local community. Of course, remote teaching can never replace real-life education, especially for younger children, but it is a brilliant alternative to be used in "unforeseen life situations". It prepares parents and children for making a sensible use of the possibilities offered by information and communication technologies. The lack of professional approach to this topic among education managers at local level significantly limits the potential of teachers.

The implementation of eTwinning projects was a good training ground for remote teaching. I was totally prepared for it. On the other hand, the situation other teachers found themselves in made them look at preparing classes from a different perspective and appreciate what I had done with students in eTwinning, here I mean interactive activities and online tasks.

Some respondents admitted that it was the experience gained during the implementation of eTwinning projects and training offered as part of the programme that allowed them to manage with remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the opinion of this group of respondents,

if they had lacked similar experiences, they would not have taught lessons to students over the Internet so smoothly.

It was only thanks to eTwinning that I coped with remote teaching so well. I had attended many online trainings, during which I discovered many IT tools that support learning.

Work in the era of COVID-19 did not pose a challenge to me, because I was used to using project method and various ICT tools in teaching when carrying out eTwinning projects. Switching from traditional to remote work was another positive experience for me. I encountered no difficulties at all.

The eTwinning platform played a key role here. I acquired probably 90% of remote teaching skills during seminars, workshops, and online courses and webinars offered at the eTwinning platform.

In this context, there were also declarations that the time of remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic provided an opportunity to improve competencies and, above all, to test one's skills acquired during training courses. It was also an opportunity to identify competence gaps and to use the time of the pandemic to attend additional courses and training, including these offered on the eTwinning platform.

To sum up, I consider remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic to be a positive experience, thanks to which I discovered new technical possibilities and focused on broadening my IT knowledge. I also found time for additional eTwinning training to make my work easier.

The pandemic turned out to be a good time for me. The situation made me act and learn about new technologies, which nowadays must be used also in traditional lessons. I did not even think that I could learn so much. Our students live in a different reality, we must move with the times. This will certainly have a positive impact on the education process.

It should be added, however, that some of the respondents declared lack of competencies, which – in the opinion of the teachers – could limit the possibilities of using resources available on the platform. It was stressed that such a risk could affect teachers with longer seniority, who are more used to traditional teaching methods. While younger teachers help them to use modern technologies (including the eTwinning platform) on a daily basis, in isolation they are left to their own devices and it is much more difficult for them to benefit from such support from other teachers.

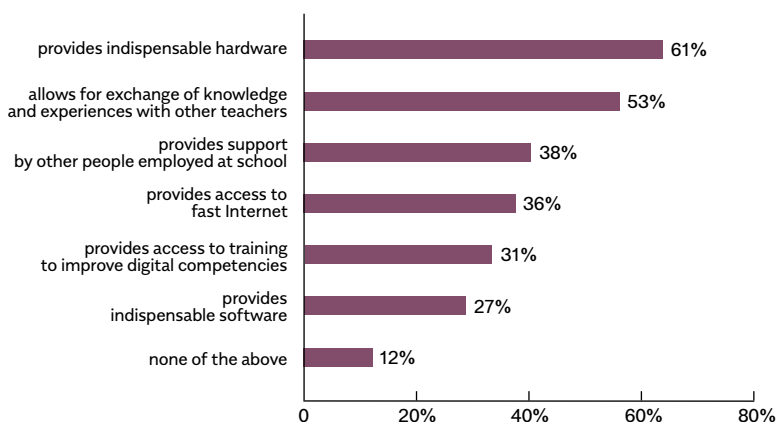
Due to my poor IT and computer skills, it is difficult to navigate eTwinning programmes on my own, especially as I do not have direct contact with my colleagues from work. However, in the future, I intend to continue to cooperate with the help of my younger colleagues.

Support provided to teachers by their home schools

Support provided by home educational institutions to their teachers seems to be an important factor determining the quality of teachers' performance in terms of modern technology use. The survey results show that the nature of such support depends on the institution in question, and that its assessment is directly related to the specific needs of a particular teacher. The percentage of declarations made by the surveyed teachers about specific forms of assistance provided by their schools makes it possible to state that it was not systemic in nature, and a large part of institutions was not able to provide teachers with the substantive and technological support they needed to use new technologies in teaching.

Figure 4. Support provided by the schools to the surveyed eTwinners (N = 1621)*

As far as the use of modern technology in teaching is concerned, my home institution, if needed...



* The figure shows the percentage of respondents who agreed with a given statement.

Source: own work.

The results of the survey show that teachers using eTwinning most often receive support from their schools taking the form of hardware that allows them to apply modern teaching methods. More than 60% of respondents confirmed that in terms of the use of modern technologies in their teaching, their schools provided them, if needed, with necessary equipment that they could use to teach classes. At the same time, more than 35% of teachers confirmed that their schools provided them with access to fast Internet, and more than 27% of the survey participants also had the possibility to use software owned by the school.

Respondents to the survey also mentioned substantive support provided by the schools, especially in terms of knowledge and experience exchange with other teachers (more than 53% of declarations), support from other people employed at school (more than 38%) and access to training to develop teachers' digital competencies (more than 31%).

Given the relatively low percentage of positive declarations (more than one third of respondents did not receive support in the form of providing necessary equipment on a daily basis, and more than two thirds did not have access to software supporting teaching tasks), it should be emphasised that the lack of such support was also noticeable in the period of remote teaching during lockdown, as evidenced by the opinions of the respondents on the support provided by the schools in terms of remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. The analysis of the responses shows that a large proportion of teachers were forced to work using their own equipment, often bought primarily for the needs of the work performed during lockdown.

In the case of remote teaching, a big problem was the lack of hardware for teachers who worked using their private equipment.

The fact that I was obliged to work using my own hardware and software in remote teaching was very demotivating.

Some of the respondents to the survey directly pointed out the lack of possibility to use computers owned by the school. They admitted that school management did not allow them to use the hardware available in their home institutions. Although, according to the declarations this was often due to a lack of adequate equipment, some respondents stated that certain institutions did possess computers that could be used for remote teaching.

The school refused to make a monitor available to me for the time of the pandemic, even though I am responsible for 16 computer stations in the school computer lab. I wrote a letter to the district governor, also in vain.

Unfortunately, the schools did not provide teachers with hardware to teach remotely, because the schools do not have adequate equipment.

Some of the surveyed teachers also admitted that the introduction of remote teaching forced them to purchase hardware and software, which entailed the necessity to incur quite considerable costs. There were also statements that such a purchase often resulted from the need to provide equipment to their children, who were also participating in online lessons at the time when the parents were obliged to teach remotely.

I had to buy hardware and software with my own funds.

What bothers me is that once again I am required to use my private equipment and Internet access. I love my job, but it starts to disturb my family and I fully understand it. I had to invest in hardware and pay extra charges. I do not think that is fair.

When I was teaching remotely, I had one desktop computer and two sons at home. One was preparing for the matura exam at the general secondary school and the other was attending technical secondary school. I had no choice, but to buy a laptop.

Similar problems were also encountered with high-speed Internet access. In this context, it was pointed out that having Internet access was a precondition for teaching remotely. It was also emphasised that this entailed additional costs that teachers had to pay with their own money.

During remote teaching, the biggest problem I encountered was the lack of fast Internet access and unstable connection.

In remote teaching, no one gave a thought to the fact that teachers and students can have insufficient bandwidth.

The respondents also presented opinions on insufficient support from the management of their institutions in relation to other aspects of the use of ICT tools. Such insufficient support could often result from the lack of digital competencies on the part of the institution management, which was coupled

with, among other things, additional bureaucracy at school level and additional duties of teachers, e.g. duplication of work.

I was using a commercial tool for teaching online lessons. I did not receive support from the headteacher. We were only required to fill in the tables to show that we taught core curriculum, despite the fact that it was already indicated in the electronic class register.

As a computer science teacher, I was given additional responsibilities by the incompetent school management. All remote education and providing support to the teaching council was thrown on my shoulders.

Remote teaching with eTwinning



Home

Projects and training in the first half of 2020

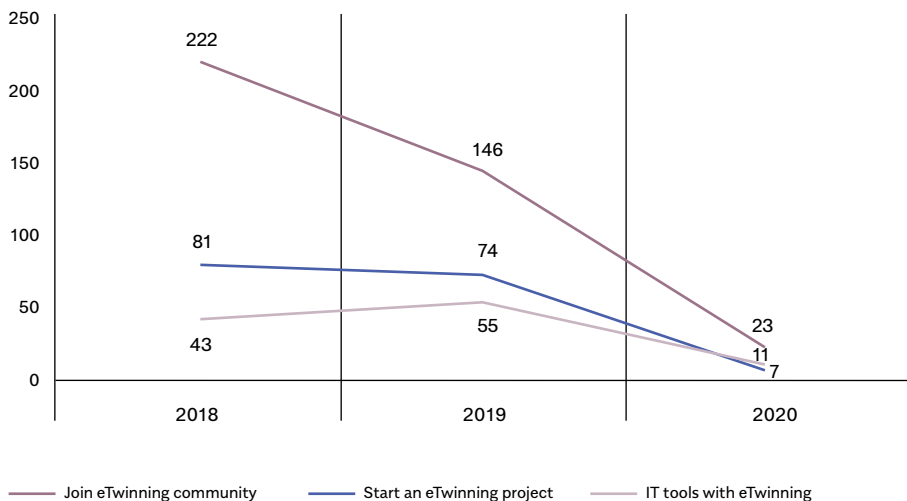
Training, provided either in traditional on-site mode (regional training) or online, is one of the basic eTwinning tools to support teachers.

Regional eTwinning training is provided in three thematic areas:

- *Join the eTwinning community* – a training event for new, unregistered teachers who want to join the community. During the training, participants register in the programme and learn the basic functionalities of the platform (profile editing, navigation, searching for a project partner);
- *Start an eTwinning project* – second level training event. During the training, registered participants learn how to plan and start a project and how to navigate the TwinSpace project platform and use its tools for project tasks;
- *IT tools with eTwinning* – a training session for advanced participants focusing on additional tools available outside the project platform that are useful and can add variety to the project.

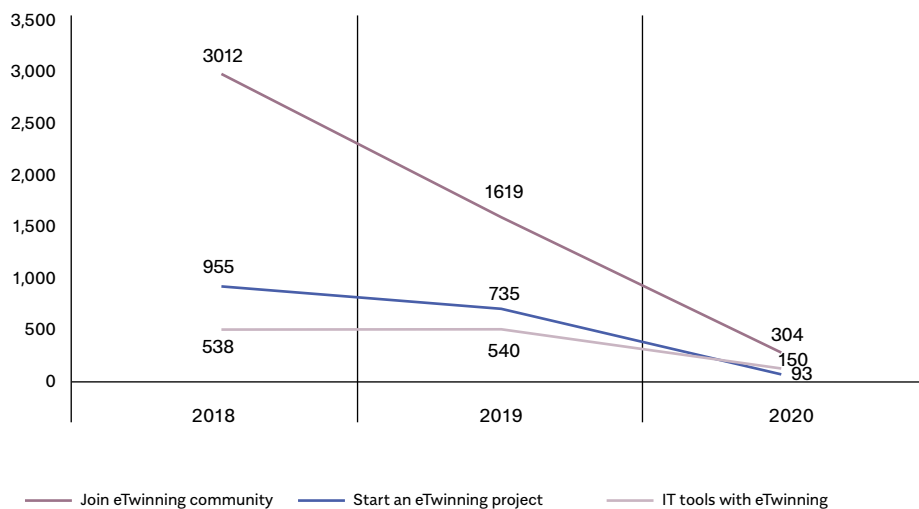
In the first three months of the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of regional eTwinning learning events and their participants was significantly lower than in the corresponding periods of 2019 and 2018.

Figure 1. Number of regional eTwinning training events held from 16.03 to 30.06 in 2018–2020



Source: own work.

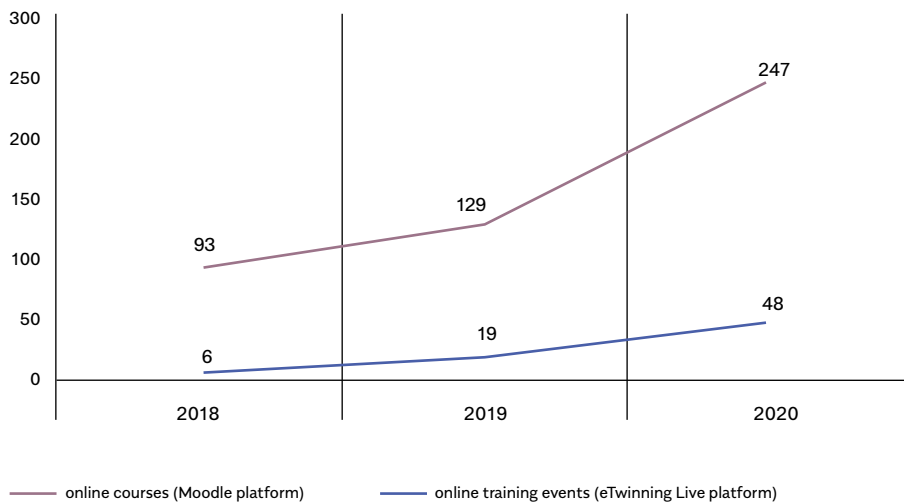
Figure 2. Number of participants in regional eTwinning training events held from 16.03 to 30.06 in 2018–2020



Source: own work.

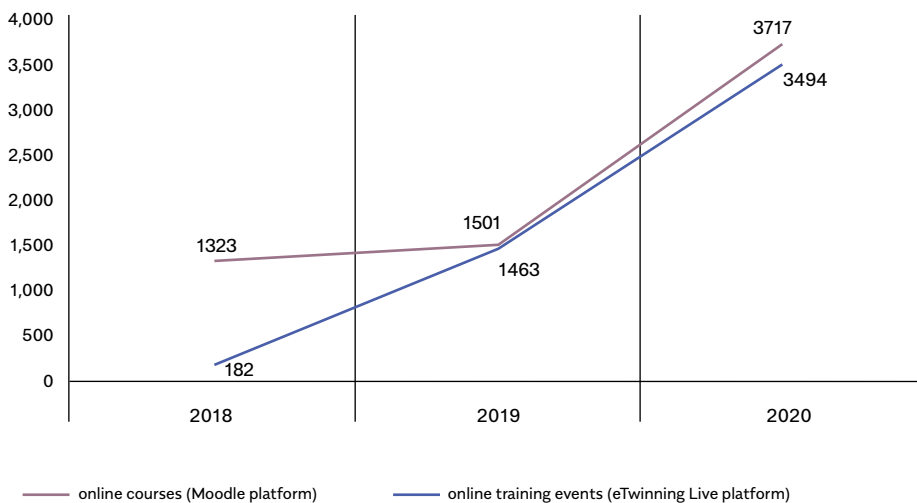
A decrease in the number of regional training events offered in traditional form during the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic was accompanied by an increase in the number of online training activities. At that time the eTwinning National Support Service in Poland ran the *Remote Teaching with eTwinning* campaign, thanks to which these efforts were intensified. As compared to previous years, the number of participants in such activities also increased significantly.

Figure 3. Number of online courses and training events held from 16.03 to 30.06 in 2018–2020



Source: own work.

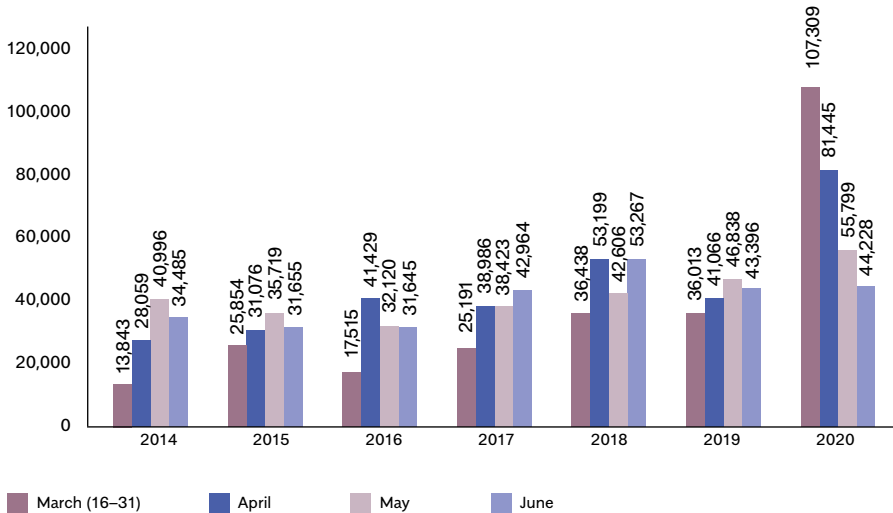
Figure 4. Number of participants in online courses and training events held from 16.03 to 30.06 in 2018–2020



Source: own work.

As the above data shows, the increase in the number of eTwinning online training activities was large. The number of participants in online courses has increased more than twofold and the number of participants in online events was almost 4.5 times bigger.

Figure 5. Number of pageview hits on the www.etwinning.pl website from 16.03 to 30.06 in 2014–2020



Source: own work.

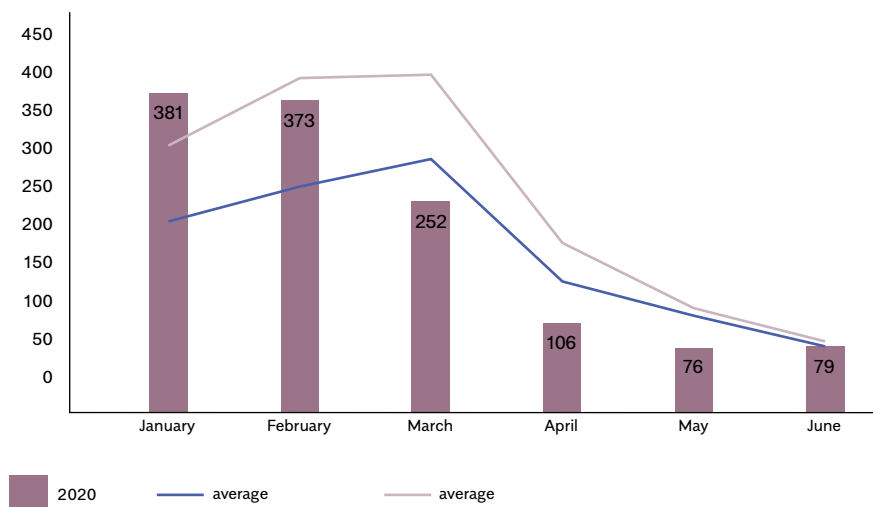
As compared to previous years, the eTwinning website had a record number of page views between March and June 2020. It was especially popular at the onset of distance education, in March 2020, when the number of page views exceeded 100,000.

At the same time, a significant decrease in the number of new projects has been observed, which may be explained by the fact that teachers and students focused on remote education and abandoned majority of additional activities during that period, such as, for example, student clubs and the implementation of international projects, even those carried out online. This is proven by the statements of surveyed eTwinners.

eTwinning takes a lot of time, and when each day I spent 10–12 hours working on the computer, conducting or preparing for a class, I simply did not feel like doing any “extras”.

It is difficult to run an eTwinning project remotely because pupils became accustomed to moderation/feedback on classroom activities. In addition, they had a great deal of compulsory work in connection with the core curriculum in all subjects, so they gave up on eTwinning projects.

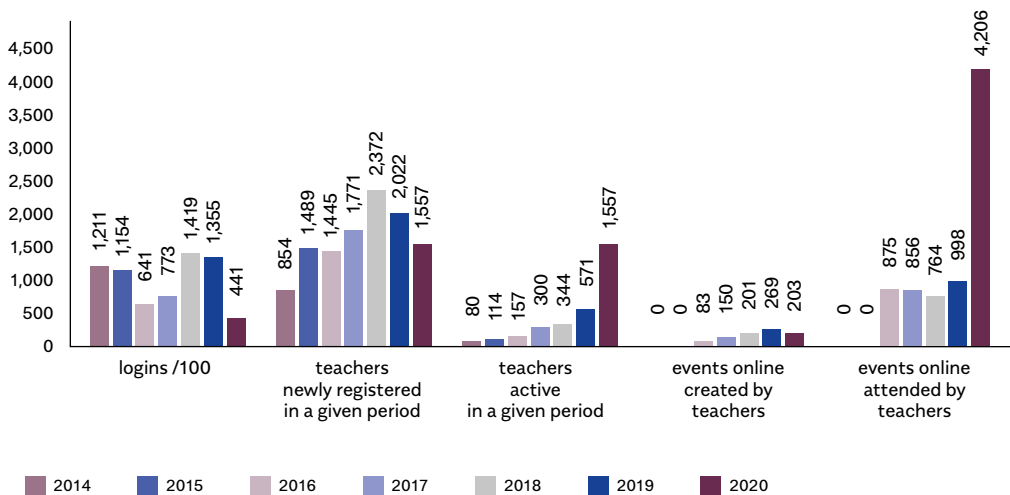
Figure 6. Number of new eTwinning projects in the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic compared to the average for these months in 2014–2019 and in 2018–2019



Source: own work.

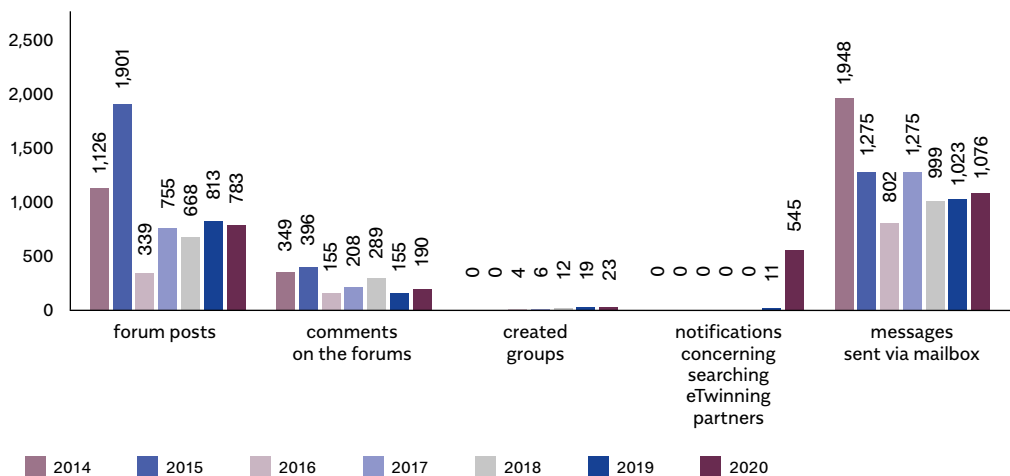
Between 16 March and 30 June 2020, the number of teachers with active status increased significantly. Compared to the same period in 2019, the number of notifications on partner search for eTwinning projects rocketed (nearly 50 times). The number of online events attended by the teachers also increased more than 4 times.

Figure 7. Teacher participation in eTwinning from 16.03 to 30.06 in 2014–2020, part 1



Source: own work.

Figure 8. Teacher participation in eTwinning from 16.03 to 30.06 in 2014–2020, part 2



Source: own work.

Activity of the eTwinning National Support Service in the period from March to August 2020

In order to help teachers switch from traditional to remote teaching, and bearing in mind the trends presented above, indicating great interest in eTwinning offer at this unprecedented time for teachers, the National Support Service in Poland launched the Remote Education with eTwinning campaign. In cooperation with experienced teachers, eTwinners working at different levels of education, online training, meetings and materials were developed to disseminate their knowledge and experience. The activities undertaken aimed at equipping teachers with knowledge, useful skills and modern tools to teach remotely.

Online webinars on the eTwinning Live platform

One of the most popular forms of training at that time were virtual meetings with experts. During 60- and 90-minute webinars, teachers presented effective methods for working online and tools for the implementation of related tasks. Discussions were held on various topics: Remote teaching and personal data protection – advice for teachers, Genial.ly – a way to teach a fantastic lesson, Using a set of tools to prevent discrimination in remote work, Remote kindergarten? It is possible! Presentations of applications for developing interactive materials for students were also popular. Since 16 March, 59 such events attended by more than 3,500 teachers were held. The recordings of webinars were made available to a wider audience on the YouTube channel – eTwinning Polska.

Online courses

Online training provided by the National Support Service since 2006 was the first choice for many teachers who wanted to develop their skills in terms of remote teaching. A number of additional courses was launched, which, since March 2020, have been attended by nearly 5,000 teachers. Moreover, new courses focusing on the most popular challenges of remote teaching have been offered: *A week with ICT tools to make remote teaching easier* and *A week with assessment and feedback in remote learning*. The offer includes 106 weekly courses on different topics, each of which is taught to a group of a dozen people or so under the supervision of an experienced trainer who is a teacher and eTwinner. The participants who complete the courses receive certificates confirming their attendance and the thematic scope of training. Almost 1,400 training groups were established between March and August 2020.

Online seminars

In addition, seminars and online events lasting several days were organised for teachers who wanted to learn about the eTwinning offer, improve their

skills, learn new tools and methods used in remote teaching and prepare for the launch of an inter-school online project. These meetings were conducted by teachers-practitioners using the presented methods in their daily work with students. From March to September 2020, 20 seminars were organised and attended by more than 700 teachers working at different levels of education. Some of these meetings were addressed to technical and trade school teachers looking for tools to implement and document their project activities closely related to practical vocational training.

eTwinning Live Groups

Teachers active in eTwinning who shared their knowledge with others were at the heart of the campaign. Their support was particularly visible in thematic groups available free of charge to each registered teacher. Groups are the spaces on the eTwinning platform, where eTwinners work together on a specific topic, exchange practices and hold discussions on teaching and learning methods. Each group is led by an experienced teacher who watches over the contents posted there, activates members of the group, collects their work and supports the activities. Topics range from language teaching to entrepreneurship education or STEAM subjects (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics). During the remote teaching, three new groups dedicated to teachers of foreign languages, humanities and those working at technical and trade schools were created. In total, more than 8,000 eTwinners are active there.

Practical tips

Experts also described their experiences. The published materials, collected in a series of articles, were based on online activities focusing on different stages of education. They addressed specific subjects, e-safety issues and aimed at meeting the most current needs of teachers working remotely. Ten articles were written, to mention: *Language education online with eTwinning projects*, *Science in Distance Learning*, *Online education and projects for students with special educational needs*, and posted on the *Distance Education with eTwinning* campaign website.

Useful materials

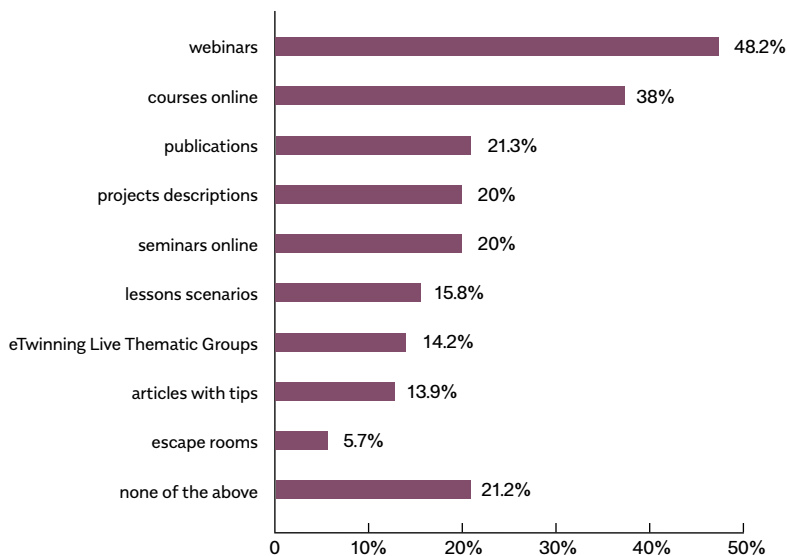
Online courses, online seminars or group activities often resulted in materials that were made available to the eTwinning community, e.g. in the form of lesson plans or escape rooms. Since March, 12 escape rooms were developed and combined the basics of coding with elements of other subjects. They were adapted to the needs of different student age groups. They can be found in the lesson plans section on the www.eTwinning.pl website.

Remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic was a challenge for all parties involved in the education of students, especially teachers – including those for whom the use of digital tools in teaching was not a problem. Almost 67% of teachers participating in the survey agreed that remote teaching during the pandemic was a big challenge, although approx. 77% of them did not have any problems with teaching online.

I managed, but I feel much more comfortable working in the classroom with my students.

In order to teach remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers registered on the eTwinning platform most often used webinars (48.2% of responses), online courses (38%) and publications (21.3%). This coincided with their declarations that online training was the best source of knowledge about the use of modern technologies in education. One in five respondents claimed that they used project descriptions and online seminars. The least popular were escape rooms (only 5.7% of responses). It is worth noting that 21.2% of the surveyed teachers registered on the eTwinning platform did not use any of the tools listed.

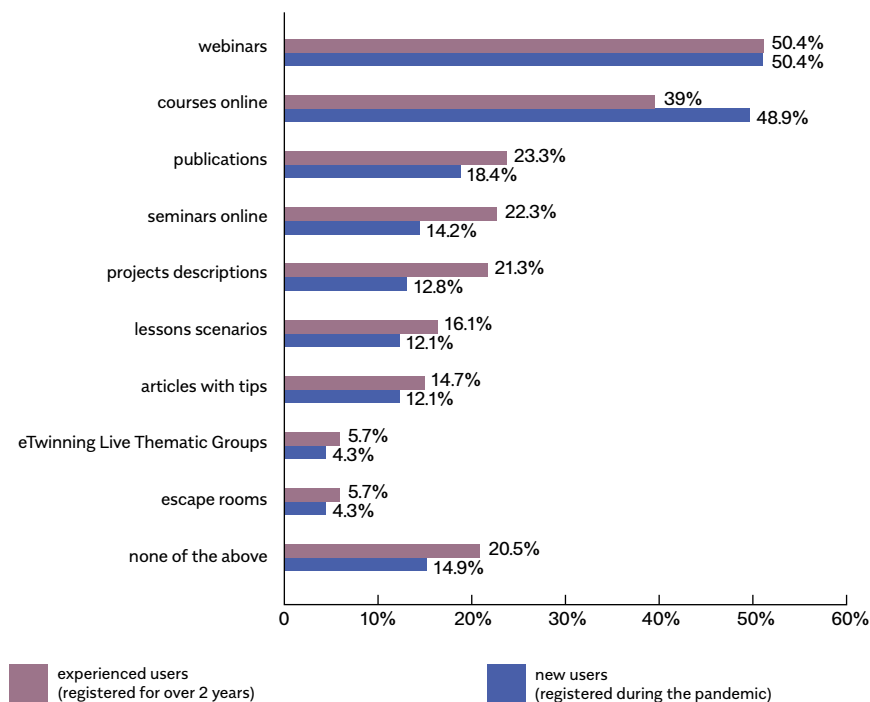
Figure 9. In order to teach remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic, I used the following training offer or teaching materials available on eTwinning (N = 1621)



Source: own work.

A comparison of responses given by experienced users (registered on the platform for more than 2 years) and those who registered only during the COVID-19 pandemic shows that representatives of both groups most willingly and equally often used webinars. Novice users more likely admitted taking part in online courses, while experienced eTwinners attended seminars. Experienced users also more often stated that they had not used any of the tools.

Figure 10. In order to teach remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic, I used the following training offer or teaching materials available on eTwinning (N = 1621)



A large part of the open contributions concerned teaching during the pandemic. Teachers often mentioned eTwinning resources and praised the platform for being a good tool that helped them prepare for using digital tools in teaching.



eTwinning is the best way to teach remotely.



I'm just beginning my eTwinning adventure. I can already see the potential of the platform.

If we have to return to remote teaching in the next school year, I will make greater use of opportunities offered by eTwinning.



The experience I have gained from many years of participating in eTwinning and actively using various forms of professional development offered by the programme have enabled me to almost seamlessly switch to remote teaching. Thank you eTwinning Poland for many years of supporting us!

The platform was mainly perceived as a tool which, on the one hand, allowed teachers who had been using it for years to prepare for remote teaching,

and on the other hand, was used as a platform for inter-school cooperation, thanks to which students could carry out tasks within the framework of inter-school projects and this way carry out some of the tasks included in the core curriculum. Some respondents recommended to other teachers running projects within the programme in order to activate passive students who are reluctant to learn remotely during the pandemic.

The implementation of eTwinning projects was a good training ground for this situation. I treated it as something normal and natural. And finally something interesting could be offered to other teachers and students, online tasks and activities enjoyed large popularity.

Remote teaching was a challenge for me. The pupils attending grades 1–3 did great. Thanks to the implementation of eTwinning projects, they knew how to work with ICT tools.

eTwinning used in remote learning has added some fun element to the madness of remote learning. It was a distraction from formal lessons. It allowed students to express themselves and show their sides they had discovered in themselves.

The pandemic has one good side. The need to work remotely motivated me to participate in online courses, seminars and webinars on the eTwinning platform. This allowed me to significantly develop my ability to use online tools, which I used when working with students. My lessons became more varied and students could test their knowledge and practise their skills with these new tools, e.g. LearningApps, Wordwall, Liveworksheets. I love Padlet and Wakelet platforms. They are great for sharing information and communicating with students.

The lack of face to face contacts with peers was one of the more frequent problems highlighted by teachers, headteachers and students in studies conducted during remote teaching in the country (Amielańczyk, Michniuk and Śliwowski 2020; Sobiesiak-Penszko and Pazderski 2020; Plebańska, Szyller and Sieńczewska 2020). This is also one of the aspects of difficulties observed in online education mentioned by eTwinners. One remedy – although imperfect – is to involve students in international projects, and to help them at least establish relationships with other students and maintain them for some time.

And one more thing that came to my mind, because a lot is said about the negative impact of remote teaching on emotional development of students caused by the lack of interpersonal contacts. I have a slightly different opinion. We build relationships using different methods. I experienced that when carrying out eTwinning projects. My students

made new friendships, which often continued in the physical world. So with skilful guidance, anyone can develop these skills and learn respect for others.

The eTwinning platform has proven very useful for remote teaching. Students could work in the safe TwinSpace and carry out projects with peers from other European countries. They could keep in touch with other students.

The platform was described as a place where you can improve digital literacy skills for teaching, thanks to participation in training and webinars organised before the pandemic and during it. Some respondents said that during the pandemic they did not use the platform, but benefited from knowledge acquired during the implementation of projects, and courses and seminars they had attended.

The eTwinning platform played a key role here. I acquired probably 90% of remote teaching skills during seminars, workshops, and online courses and webinars offered at the eTwinning platform.

eTwinning did a great job. I have taken part in many webinars, trainings, and week-long courses, thanks to which I acquired many useful skills and gained knowledge on how to teach online.

All the eTwinning resources were a great help for me in remote teaching. Thanks to online courses and webinars I learnt a lot of tools that I will certainly use in my work at school.

To me, eTwinning was the only source of reliable and valuable information on how to work remotely. No one else gave me tips, advice or ideas. I know that textbook publishers also offered training. I did not take part in it, because I attended various eTwinning training events. Seminars lasting several days were very effective. I also learn a lot from week-long courses. I like the one month course, too. Webinars were a great source of inspiration and encouragement to deepen knowledge about technology.

But the platform is not a mere training tool. It can also serve as a forum for exchange of information by teachers, for discussions and experience sharing. Some respondents emphasised this aspect and they mentioned cooperation within newly established groups or as part of international projects.

A series of webinars organised at the time of distance learning as well as videos and presentations posted on the eTwinning Live Group were also valuable initiatives.

Thanks to cooperation with teachers from other schools during the seminars I learnt a lot and exchanged valuable experiences.

eTwinning is a tool that can also be used to teach younger children. This is evidenced by the statements of some of the respondents. One of the teachers working in a kindergarten used the information gained during the courses both in her work with pre-schoolers and to communicate with her colleagues and parents of the pre-schoolers.

Distance learning in kindergarten looks a bit different than at school. However, thanks to the courses on the eTwinning platform, I had learned a lot of tools that were also useful for working with young children. I use many of them to contact the teaching staff, parents and partners in the Erasmus+ project.

As one of the platform users said:

Currently, it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of distance learning in terms of students' knowledge. They have undoubtedly developed the ability to use new technological solutions.

She also added that remote teaching was much easier for teachers who had previously completed online courses, and especially eTwinning training. Statements by eTwinners confirm that the platform is useful to its users. It helps teachers improve their digital skills and allows students to engage in international and national projects.

I should take part in eTwinning training. I have heard many positive opinions about it, and I have to find it out for myself.

In the future, if we have to teach remotely again, I want to use eTwinning even more. It is a great community and collaboration platform.



Home

Evaluation of the eTwinning platform



Home

The platform was highly rated by its users. It is worth noting that the majority of them had been using its resources for a long time – for more than two years. This group comprised about 57% of the respondents. Other teachers either registered in the past 2 years (32%) or between March and June 2020 (about 11%). Also among them very positive opinions about the platform prevailed.

eTwinning is my “family”. I cannot even imagine my life without it.

Every teacher should use eTwinning. All novelties on the fly, for free, 24/7.

The eTwinning platform is a place where you can find a lot of inspiration in the form of project kits, as well as the offer of courses, seminars or webinars tailored to individual interests or needs. It is a space for sharing good practices with other teachers and organising cooperation between schools, also international one. The eTwinning programme contributed greatly to my teaching work. It gave me opportunities for personal development, and to embark on educational adventures with my students as part of domestic and international projects.

I wish I had joined eTwinning earlier. It is a little bit late, but I’m catching up. eTwinning is a real treasure house. It offers fantastic tools, you can meet great people there, find wonderful ideas and opportunities for cooperation. I have participated in all possible forms of professional development. What I have learned there, I am going to use in my school work starting in September.

The most praised opportunities included participation in webinars, online training and knowledge sharing within eTwinning thematic groups. In particular, online courses were appreciated for their contents, especially the presentation of IT tools to support learning. It was emphasised that thanks to the implementation of eTwinning projects, you could learn many valuable tools to be used in online education.

The biggest advantages included the 24/7 availability of the platform’s resources, free access to materials, training and webinars on the use of digital tools in teaching.

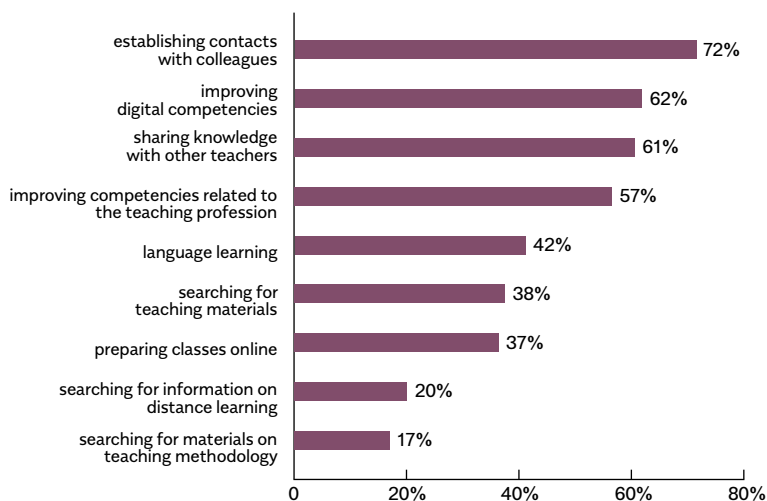
You are the best when it comes to language teacher training. Thanks to participation in your training (two traditional and one online) I was able to teach remotely. The training you provide should be compulsory for teachers.

It was very important for me to participate in all kinds of webinars organised during the pandemic. In my remote teaching I used the materials provided by the speakers.

eTwinning has mainly helped the respondents establish contacts with other teachers, share knowledge and improve digital competencies, and, in general, competencies related to the teaching profession. The platform was also helpful in preparing for online classes, language learning and searching for teaching materials. Not so many teachers used the platform to search for teaching methodology materials and information on distance learning. In the group of people who registered at the platform quite recently (during the pandemic), the prevailing answers were “preparing for online classes”, “improving competencies related to the teaching profession” and “improving digital competencies”. Other uses of the platform included sharing knowledge with other teachers and establishing contacts with colleagues.

The lack of support in terms of remote teaching methodology was also pointed out in other studies, where the respondents reported that they lacked methodical preparation, understood as the ability to select appropriate tools, methods and contents available in digital form (Plebańska, Szyller and Sieńczewska 2020). The results prove that it was an important issue for teachers that calls for reflection on the part of organisations and institutions supporting the teaching process in schools.

Figure 1. eTwinning is helpful in... (N = 1621)



Source: own work.

The respondents to the survey could express their opinion on the structure and contents of the platform. They pointed out a few elements that could be improved to make the tool more useful. A few respondents suggested that the tools should also feature *BookCreator* to improve the functionality of the TwinSpace platform, the layout of the website should be more up to date, new training on online teaching should be introduced with the option of having more time to become acquainted with a given tool or to make it possible to have a project involving students coming from different schools. The need for staging training to demonstrate the opportunities for using eTwinning in language learning, physical education and vocational subjects was identified. It was also suggested that during lockdown the eTwinning Live platform should be available to teachers to stage live lessons and that the in-school project option introduced during the pandemic should stay as a permanent feature of the platform.

I have been active on eTwinning for a very long time. Help and support is provided mainly to primary school teachers. I teach vocational subjects and computer science at an advanced level in a technical secondary school. It is difficult to find specialist materials and support for teachers of the above-mentioned subjects there.

It would be a good thing if in-school projects were introduced on a permanent basis.

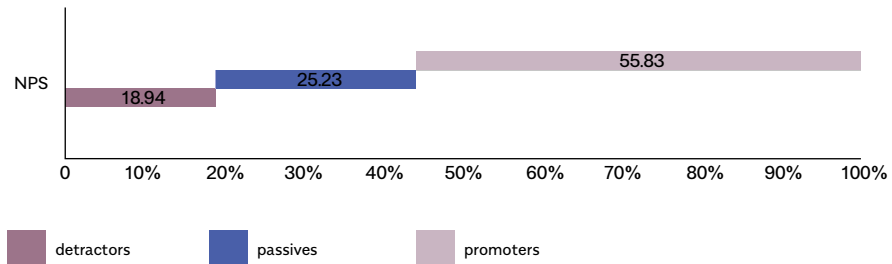
This would have a very positive impact on learning how to organise your work, take responsibility for students' learning outcomes and on cooperation between teachers.

In order to better communicate and reach teachers with the offer, it was recommended that a newsletter with a short description of the most interesting materials available was issued. This would encourage teachers to visit the platform more often. It was also postulated that communication about webinars and workshops reaches them much earlier than just 1–2 days before their date.

Net Promoter Score (NPS), which shows the likelihood of a given tool/service being recommended to other people, is a reliable metric of the platform's performance. Respondents are divided into three groups: detractors, passives and promoters. Detractors are the group who responded with a score between 0 and 6 on a 0–10 points scale. Their responses mean that they are not likely to recommend the tool to others. Passives' responses were 7 and 8. Despite relatively high score, they are considered to be tool-neutral. The last group are promoters who responded with a score of 9 or 10. They are definite enthusiasts of the solution.

The Net Promoter Score is calculated by subtracting the percentage of detractors from the percentage of promoters. In this survey, NPS amounted to 37, which is in the upper range of a good result. Among the respondents, those who would recommend the use of the platform's resources (promoters) prevailed. This group accounted for about 56%, and was slightly larger among those registered on the platform for more than two years. They amount to about 58% (the NPS for this group was over 40). The smallest percentage of promoters was observed in the group of teachers registered on the platform for less than two years (52%).

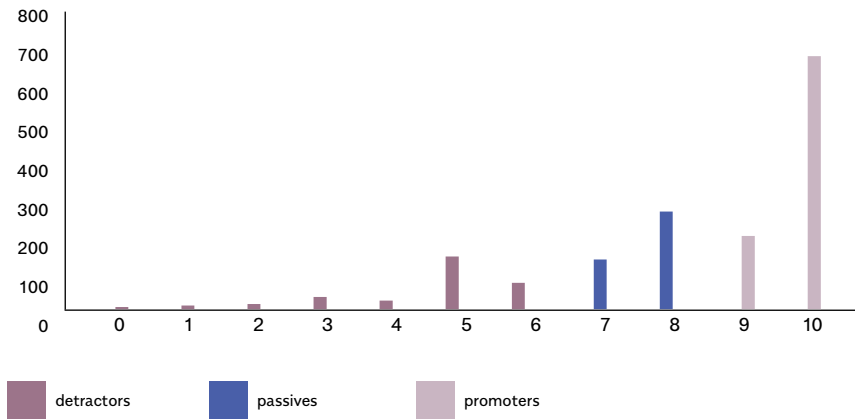
Figure 2. NPS* for eTwinning platform – distribution of three types of respondents (N = 1621)



* NPS – Net Promoter Score.

Source: own work.

Figure 3. On a scale from 0 to 10, how likely is it that you would recommend eTwinning to other teachers who work remotely? (N = 1621)



Source: own work.

A large group of respondents are regular users of the resources posted on the platform. They access it several times a month (almost 35%) or several times a week (almost 15%). This group accounts for 50% of the respondents (teachers who registered on the platform in the past two years use it more often during a month and during a week). Noteworthy is a fairly large group (reaching almost 38%) of people using the platform occasionally.

Moreover, 9% of registered users do not use the platform's resources at all. Although the study did not allow for exploring the reason for it, it is worth considering how to make the platform more attractive (or accessible) to the latter half of registered users.

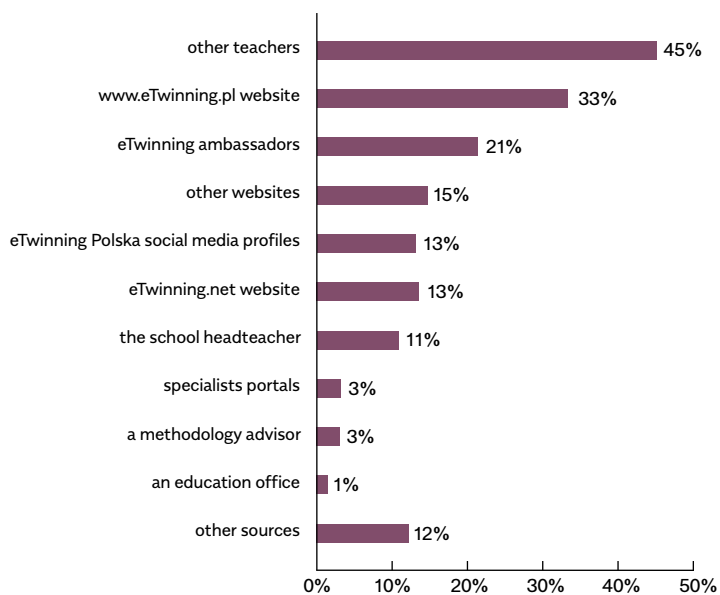
Table 1. I use eTwinning... (N = 1790)

response	number of respondents	share in %
every day	56	3.13
several times a week	264	14.75
several times a month	626	34.97
rarely, sporadically	675	37.71
I do not use eTwinning	169	9.44

Source: own work.

The main source of information about the possibilities offered by the eTwinning platform were other teachers (44% of responses), followed by the www.etwinning.pl website (almost 33%) and information obtained from programme ambassadors (over 21%). Other websites and social media related to the programme were also mentioned. Headteachers of educational institutions were also indicated as a source of information about the platform (11% of responses).

Figure 4. I learned about the possibilities offered by eTwinning from... (N = 1621)



Source: own work.

Remote teaching seen with the eyes of eTwinning ambassadors



Home

The eTwinning National Support Service in Poland asked teachers, who are eTwinning ambassadors – active users of the platform, to describe their everyday lives while teaching remotely. In this chapter we present eleven opinions regarding the process of working with students from March to June 2020 and the most useful tools used during that period. In addition, we touch upon the challenges associated with conducting distance teaching and how to deal with those challenges.

Primary education (grades 1–3) teacher, primary school

How do I use ICT and modern technology in my daily work?

In my work, I use a computer, an interactive whiteboard, tablets and laptops on a daily basis. Even during PE classes I occasionally use ICT, for example, when teaching a dance routine. And modern technology? Sometimes I wonder if this term is adequate for the tools I use at work. Why? Because for me the term “modern technology” means robots – from LEGO to Ozobots, 3D VR glasses, multimedia tables and other technological novelties, which are taking increasingly bold strides into the educational environment. The tech that I use at work has already become part of my everyday life.

The purpose of ICT tools is to make the classes more attractive, to explain certain concepts by means of a presentation or a YouTube video, to consolidate knowledge through interactive games, such as LearningApps or, very occasionally, to test pupils’ knowledge. I use tablets, the operation of which is conditioned by the power of Wi-Fi, during group activities, such as knowledge tournaments (Kahoot!, Who wants to be a millionaire, Quizlet) and during activities which require pupils to search for information. I also teach programming, because it is possible to conduct this teaching off-line. While speaking to children, I also try to incorporate elements of IT jargon. In order to consolidate appropriate vocabulary, I say “an icon” instead of “a picture”, or “a homepage”, not “a house symbol”. Very often, instead of giving my pupils traditional homework, I send them links to online assignments prepared by myself or by other teachers. Using the possibilities offered by Google, I prepare short clips with pictures of the children engaged in activity, for example during group work or presentations of their artwork and literary texts. ICT tools also form the basis of various eTwinning projects. Thanks to, for example, videoconferences, my students gain the opportunity to work and play together with their peers from all over Europe. In previous years, I even tried to run a class website co-edited by students.

What was my plan for remote teaching during the pandemic?

I think that it is fair to say that the beginning of the pandemic took everybody by surprise. Initially, nobody realised that lockdown would mean that schools would close for such a long time. During the last day of traditional, classroom-based teaching – just before the lockdown was announced, I taught my pupils how to log into LearningApps. Was it my intuition or just a coincidence? – I do not know.

Before the announcement of the start of compulsory distance learning was made, I was already sending out online tasks to my pupils, in order to fill up their time while under lockdown and to direct their attention to activities other than computer games. Shortly before the commencement of formal distance learning, **I carried out a survey which gave me an idea of the available equipment and capabilities of my pupils** and to gauge how time-consuming and difficult the tasks that they had received from me thus far had been. This allowed me to better prepare the content of my lessons. The surveys also helped us set convenient times and frequencies for our online meetings, so that everyone could participate. Especially since we would occasionally invite some guests, such as a blind musician or a beekeeper.

I also set myself a list of priorities that I was focusing on during the period of remote teaching:

- I cooperate with children and their parents instead of making demands – a pandemic is not the time to impose conditions on people who are worried about their health and that of their loved ones, their workplace and finances (children can present the outcomes of the activities they are participating in if they wish to do so, but it is not mandatory).
- **Learning needs to be enjoyable and cannot be an additional stress for the child and the parent – I added tutorials and descriptions to the new, more difficult tools.** I tried to keep it varied (Padlet, LearningApps, Google, Wordwall, Liveworksheets, Genial.ly, Mathzoo), but also in moderation. The computer cannot dominate the children's day, so I made sure I was not overdoing it with videos, online assignments, and presentations.
- **I trust parents,** I believe they want what is best for their children, therefore, I do not require time-consuming documentation of the child's work. At this stage of education, the parent should be able to check the correctness of the performed tasks (in the case of more difficult tasks, I sent the answer key). Each written exercise contained criteria for evaluating the student's work.
- I conduct online meetings so that children can talk to each other and share their emotions.

The last point required the most effort on my side, because I only knew communication platforms where small groups of people could talk to each other. After an intensive search and testing process, I chose Zoom. The first meeting was incredible, and the children were very happy to see each other. We talked about how they were feeling and about ways to fill their time indoors. I directed my questions to each one of my pupils, but I did not require an answer as I respected the fact that some of them were not sure about the camera and the microphone. During the subsequent sessions, every single one of them wanted to take part and speak – it was a very special experience for me.

What surprised me the most? The fact that **parents were learning how to use many everyday ICT tools with us**. For them, this whole situation was also a test and a time to learn new skills. I was also pleasantly surprised by the **positive feedback** that I was receiving. Most of the pupils and their caretakers persevered with distance learning till the end of the lockdown. We will find out the results in September, but I already know that my children are now capable of handling many applications independently and have certainly improved their reading skills thanks to the daily “letters” from me.

Polish language teacher, primary school, group of secondary technical schools of construction

What was my plan for remote teaching during the pandemic?

In March 2020 the way we live our lives changed completely – and that also extended to the realm of education. Suddenly, teachers were faced with a new task – remote teaching.

But how should we go about teaching remotely? I asked myself many questions and searched intensively for answers. First, I started browsing teacher forums to see how others were coping. I noticed that everyone was overcome with some sort of educational frenzy: teachers began to improve their technological competencies by taking part in various training courses on the use of online tools in work with students. I quickly became a part of this trend, spending long hours in front of the computer. My younger daughter, out of boredom, was tugging at my sleeves and stepping between me and the monitor, while my older son was patiently waiting for me to take my hazy eyes off the screen. At one point I said to myself: *STOP!* I realised that I had to work out, on my own terms, how to contact students, provide them with materials, verify their knowledge and, above all, to get in touch with them, just to have a chat – which we all needed at that difficult time.

What to do? Act! I knew from the very beginning that I wanted to meet with my students for online lessons. Before the pandemic, we had developed a good relationship, learned how to work with each other, and implemented many educational projects, so I could not imagine jeopardising it all. In addition, **I wanted to make sure that everything was OK with my students, and if they had bad moments, it was during the online meetings that we would find time to talk about it.** In this unusual situation, I wanted to ensure that the remnants of normality were being preserved.

We were trying to select an appropriate communication tool that would be functional for both me and my students together (especially since some of them only had a telephone at their disposal). I shared my thoughts on the previously established chat group on Messenger and it did not take long for them to respond. I received a message: *Ma'am, we would like to invite you to Discord.* One of the Primary 6 pupils took it upon himself to create an online lesson, added his friends and spent the afternoon with me to train me up. Another girl recorded a short tutorial for me, so that I could find my way around the Discordian reality. After the initial training, we established a fixed timetable together and met regularly. From Discord, my school switched to Microsoft Teams, where I felt very much at home.

Our meetings had a certain structure. At the beginning I always asked my students how they were feeling, then we would briefly speak about their everyday lives, and then we would commence with the work. We would discuss the lessons and introduce the tasks that the pupils were supposed to do on their own, demonstrate ways of doing it, clarify any doubts and jointly solve any problems that may have emerged. Of course, there were technical difficulties: someone had trouble logging in, while someone else had no idea how to do it at all. Some of the students were too shy to speak or did not want to turn the webcam on. Despite this, I was not willing to give up and I was appreciative of those who wanted to participate and put the effort into it. **I was rewarding all those who actively participated with positive grades. I was not handing out any fail grades.** I was happy that we were going through this difficult time together.

In addition to the virtual meetings, I also prepared online learning materials for my students. Thanks to eTwinning training, ICT tools are a permanent element of my work. I posted numerous tasks and exercises in LearningApps, Quizziz, Quizlet and many others via the Padlet account that I had set up for my students. I made sure that they were properly organised and well annotated (also in terms of the schedule), so that pupils could easily navigate through their workload and stay up to date. Upon completion of a given segment of coursework, I would prepare questions in a Google Forms survey or tasks

in Liveworksheets and send students links that they would subsequently send back to me after completing the tasks. Students would also upload the outcomes of their work to the Padlet account, for example, information about their talents in the form of a comic book, presentation or a poster. **Students were developing their digital competencies very intensively at that time, too. They were also learning independence and decision-making.** Since they had a lot of freedom in carrying out various tasks, they were also developing their creativity. Before one of the online lessons I sent the students three Dixit cards, asking them to write a short story. The only condition was to include a selected literary character in their statements (I wanted to take this opportunity to check what they remembered from the content of their reading material). During the meeting, volunteers read their works and, although they all had the same cards, their ideas, outlines of the plot and choice of literary heroes were extremely varied. **One of the students asked in a private message: *M'am, could I submit an entire essay? I got a little carried away with it, I have 1225 words so far.* Eventually, the story turned into a book, and now the author is writing a movie script based on his original story.** Isn't this sweet music for a teacher's ears?

The period of distance learning was also a good time for undertaking innovative activities. One such idea was the launch of a nationwide eTwinning project, the aim of which was to develop in pupils the ability to write reviews, share their own thoughts and overcome communication barriers. The task consisted of writing or recording a video containing a review of a favourite book. The results of their work were then shared on a blog.

The invited guests – writers – were involved in the project. One of them was Tomasz Brewczyński, who recently made his debut with a crime novel titled *Implication [Implikacja]*. He recorded a short video message encouraging young people to open up to the world by reading and writing their own texts.

The experience of remote teaching was a lesson in its own right, and it was an extremely important one for me personally. It facilitated the continuation of previous activities, while fostering new skills and giving me a great sense of satisfaction. Thanks to distance learning, the things we have already achieved with our students were not lost and we will remain constantly open to further new experiences and solutions. **No matter how schools operate in the near future, we will continue to focus on building relationships and self development.** This always pays off.

English language teacher, primary school

How do I use ICT and modern technology in my daily work?

When I started working as an English teacher in kindergarten in 2008, my lessons were mostly based on picture cards and songs played from a tape recorder. The toddlers would persistently repeat new words, do actions for English nursery rhymes on their fingers, and the braver ones would try to initiate their first conversations with the puppets, which I would bring along to make my classes more varied. There was no chance to involve any modern technology – a computer, tablet, interactive whiteboard – none of that was available to us.

Less than a year later, I moved to a lower secondary school, where each teacher's main asset was, apart from the printed register, a coursebook. In the classroom I had at my disposal a blackboard, some chalk and a desk, and sometimes I even managed to find some free equipment to organise listening comprehension classes. ICT? Well, once again, the tape recorder had to be enough.

In 2010, I took up a job at the primary school where I still work today. This working environment has offered me something that had been lacking in other schools – access to a computer room. To be honest, at that point in time, I did not know many valuable websites that I could use in order to support my pupils in their quest for knowledge. It was only by joining the eTwinning programme and undertaking my first project with a primary school in Greece that I was motivated to increase my fledgling knowledge of information and communication technology in education. By the time we took part in the second and third eTwinning projects, my students were able to use Voki, SlideShare, GoAnimate, Vimeo, Smilebox, LipDub!, ooVoo and Issuu. The outcomes of their work were then documented on a website, set up at their request. Those were the beginnings of my educational adventure with ICT.

Several years have passed since then, and **I still remember the commitment and delight of children who were just discovering the educational opportunities offered to them by modern technology.** I was also motivated by their enthusiasm. I quickly discovered that **modern technology neither likes a lack of humility nor laziness.** As I have always preferred to learn at my own pace rather than following a group, I have opted for self-improvement. The method I chose at that time suited me well and I still use it today.

First, I follow partner forums, teacher groups (e.g. on Facebook) and identify any technological solutions that are recommended there, then I look at examples of ready-made resources. Next, I test the chosen tool on my own, always keeping in mind the needs and capabilities of my students. If I come across any problems, I use eTwinning courses where I can not only dispel my

doubts and get to know all the features of a given application or platform, but also take inspiration from the work of other teachers – practitioners. On many occasions I have had the opportunity to see that no other training gives me such an injection of knowledge combined with the motivation to put newly acquired skills into practice straight away.

I am very fortunate that the language lab where I teach both lower primary and upper primary classes is very well equipped. During lessons we often use the interactive whiteboard. Younger children learn through play, by taking part in vocabulary consolidating games and by solving tasks from Educandy, Wordwall and LearningApps, while older children use tools such as Quizizz, Kahoot!, Quizlet, Mentimeter or AnswerGarden to reinforce lexical and grammatical structures, practice language functions and develop skills such as cooperation, logical thinking and expressing opinions. **I often encourage students to use their mobile phones, in order to show them that they can utilise them for more than just browsing Facebook or playing games.**

Children love using the activities based on the Actionbound application, through which the classroom transforms into an Escape Room for the duration of the lesson.

Apart from English language classes, I also conduct project meetings. We use both the language lab and the computer room. We use basic tools (Word, PowerPoint, Paint) as well as more advanced ones (Prezi, Canva, Padlet, Linoit, Genial.ly) to carry out project activities and to document the results. A frequent element of the classes are tasks, which develop computational thinking. We then use the internet publication *The Book of Coding and Ciphering for Young Learners* prepared by us and our partners a few years ago as part of the project, as well as internet platforms: studio.code.org and [Interlandia](https://interlandia.com).

As an English language teacher, I really care about the development of student' cultural knowledge, supported by practical skills in the field of creative use of ICT. That is why every year, on the occasion of the European Day of Languages, International Dot Day and Safer Internet Day, I organise a competition in my school based on QR codes, which kids are supposed to track all over the school building. Within each code there is a different task that can be read using the code reader on a phone or tablet. Thanks to this solution, students have a great time and can spend their breaks actively.

What was my plan for remote teaching during the pandemic?

Although I am doing much better with technology now than I was a few years ago, the beginning of the remote teaching period was not easy for me. Due to the fact that my pupils live in small towns, where there are often problems with the Internet connection, conducting on-line lessons was unfortunately not

an option. After reviewing the available options and discussing them with the school management, I opted for tools that allowed me to both present the lesson content and provide students with valuable training materials in a structured manner.

In primary 1–3, the choice ultimately lay with Trello, an interactive whiteboard, where all the content I developed was passed on to pupils and their parents, who usually support their children in their learning at this stage of education. The great advantage of this tool is its transparency and compactness – one board can clearly present a set of issues from the entire coursework segment, and I can add to it materials that consolidate and test the growth of knowledge and skills from various external sources. For older pupils, however, I decided on the Genial.ly platform, with which I prepared an interactive board for each class every week. On the boards I placed developed lesson topics and presentations along with links to useful resources, such as: work cards from Liveworksheets, educational games and quizzes from Quizizz, Wordwall or LearningApps, sketchnologies (e.g. EduNotatki), videos from YouTube, as well as statements and explanations recorded with Vocaroo.

The chosen solutions proved to be excellent – the students had permanent access to the materials, they could access them on a computer, as well as on a tablet or phone. What was also important, is the fact that **in the event of any issues with Internet access, they did not have to stress about missing an online lesson conducted within a set time.** In case of any doubt, both students and their parents made contact with me by e-mail or via Messenger, so I had access to feedback on an ongoing basis. The success of the solutions I have chosen is also evidenced by the fact that none of the students have taken advantage of the online consultation via Skype that I have offered them – they found that the materials I have developed were clearly communicated and everything that was required to understand the topics was already included.

I did not want to put project activities on the back burner during the period of remote teaching, so I encouraged the kids to take part. We were remotely creating boards on Padlet and the interactive boards and presentations on Genial.ly. Older pupils have access to the TwinSpace project, so they were using it in active collaboration with project partners. The activities carried out from March to June allowed us to complete our year-long project, which in July was awarded the Quality Label in all three of the partner countries: Poland, Slovakia and Lithuania.

Another challenge was the task of remote grading of students. I wanted precise results that are consistent with the student's actual knowledge and skills, so I decided to first create quiz tests using Google Forms (Test option). One month after the introduction of remote teaching, I became familiar with

the TestPortal platform. I was impressed by its capabilities, in particular with the Honest Respondent feature and the automatic scoring and grading system that I could set up in accordance with the assessment criteria I had chosen. I then developed summary tests and sent them to my students. The tool has worked well and the idea of using it was quickly picked up by other teachers from my school.

Conducting distance education is not an easy task, but I am convinced that properly selected ICT tools can significantly improve the process. I believe that the training of teachers in terms of using modern technology in their daily work should be given special emphasis.

A teacher responsible for co-organising educational processes, primary school

How do I use ICT and modern technology in my everyday work?

In my life there are no such things as mistakes. There are only situations that tell us that we should do things differently next time. This is what I have learnt from eTwinning, an initiative with which I have been associated for 15 years, i.e. from the very beginning. The projects that I have carried out during this period have enabled me to diversify my activities in terms of topics, ideas for implementing plans, and selection of tools. Thereby providing me with exceptional personal development opportunities, constant inspiration and the desire to seek new solutions. The constant exchange of experience and knowledge between creative partners in the project allowed me to feel confident about ICT solutions when I had to take up a new challenge – remote teaching.

I very often take advantage of the training, webinars and publications offered by the eTwinning programme. The direct training sessions, international contact seminars, conferences and online courses enrich my workshop and support the development of competencies that are essential for modern day teachers. The numerous international meetings, in which I took part, gave me the opportunity to meet extraordinary people, get to know new working methods and gain valuable experience. Both the use of ICT tools in my daily work and the constant discovery of new possibilities and applications gives me joy and the feeling that I am not too far behind my pupils. Because it is us, the teachers, who should often try to keep up with our students. Our task is to create an interesting, modern form for educational content that meets the needs of the contemporary world. We must follow the path of progress, whether we like it or not, otherwise students will grow bored instead of learning.

I am very fortunate that our school is well equipped. There are interactive boards and computers practically in every classroom – our students have plenty of opportunities to test their skills. They can use their own computers and phones efficiently – often much better than I can. Therefore, my task is largely to supervise their activities and to cooperate with parents, in order to ensure that their knowledge and creativity is being used wisely. **I believe that we have gained a lot of skills through the international eTwinning projects.**

What was my plan for remote teaching during the pandemic?

I have always put a lot of emphasis on IT security, so I was very happy that the school decided to use the Microsoft package. With the help of these tools, I created tasks for students and organised online meetings. Almost all of my students participated in them. When it comes to pupils with special educational needs, close cooperation with parents proved to be invaluable. All I had to do was to adapt the tasks to their abilities, because they certainly were not lacking in enthusiasm!

I would love to continue using Microsoft tools in the next school year. In my opinion, from now on, the **teachers' meetings** should always be conducted online. Background silence and the possibility to focus on the speakers, coupled with instant and confidential voting are the main advantages that allow precision and save time.

When distance learning commenced, I felt well prepared for it. I was not afraid of technical issues, which in turn allowed me to focus on the needs of my students. The true challenge of this period was establishing relations. First of all, it was necessary to instigate a positive atmosphere, help the pupils relax a little and feel more confident in this new situation. I also had to accept that teenagers do not like to appear in front of a camera. I started with simple and fun activities, such as jigsaw puzzles made from photos of pupils from the time we were implementing some projects together, or a set of cheerful welcome cards made with the Toony Tool (a tool we have learned about during one of the eTwinning trainings). I suggested to the students that they should use this tool themselves to implement one of the project tasks, and this is how the cards for our partners were created. Such simple and pleasant activities have helped us deal with our emotions and provided positive impressions at a time when we all missed each other and the traditionally understood class-based format of schooling.

Chemistry teacher, primary school, general secondary school, group of sports schools

How do I use ICT and modern technology in my everyday work?

I have always been interested in technological innovations and I remember perfectly well the beginnings of computerisation in Poland. The first websites, learning to create in HTML, Java scripts – it was not easy. **Nowadays, however, we are flooded with a multitude of applications designed to make our lives easier – the only thing that remains is to choose wisely...**

I use many programmes, utilising their full potential to a greater or lesser extent, but I try to avoid excess. Instead of using five different communicators – I opt for a single one that has all the functions I need, one well-mastered, decent photo processing programme instead of 10 different apps that are currently trendy, and so on. I have been following this principle for years, observing calmly the trends in the teaching community. Many of my fellow teachers, not feeling confident in this field, either push the problem aside and try to organise their work in such a way as to use ICT as little as possible or take up course after course without having the time to consolidate their knowledge and skills. As a result, they often quickly forget everything and go back to the starting point. I think that it would be a good idea, initially, to master a set of 4 simple tools that will be useful for performing popular tasks – photo and video processing, creating posters, writing stories together and evaluating. With a well-mastered foundation, you can easily build upon it and develop new skills.

How do I broaden my competencies and where do I acquire them?

To put it simply – everywhere! At conferences, thematic workshops, meetings with colleagues, seminars with other teachers, while creating projects, when browsing the Internet, in online groups. I download every new app that catches my interest, then gradually work out its features, then pick and choose from amongst the ones that really caught my eye. Then I share them with my friends.

I use modern technologies, which I consider valuable, to explore and create new forms of transferring and consolidating knowledge, so that I can always grab the attention of young people. Variation in methodology has a good effect on the dynamics and progress of teaching. With the help of appropriate applications supported by online textbooks and movies, I implement the core curriculum, work with students using the flipped classroom model, as well as the project method (both in a group and individually) while adapting them to the abilities of my students. **It is well worth remembering, however, that although the right choice of tools aids learning, supports the development of students and improves our work, their excess is definitely harmful and quickly gets**

boring. It is sometimes worth returning to traditional forms of activities and, for example, alternating between online quizzes and traditional board games or combining methods by creating movement games which include the use of QR codes (e.g. Escape Room).

What was my plan for remote teaching during the pandemic?

On the 9th of March, the flu grounded me at home, and two days later, to my surprise, all schools were closed. *What now?* – I wondered. I was not at work, I felt under-informed and frustrated, wondering what will happen next, how will we manage this situation?

eTwinning quickly reacted to the situation and many workshops, webinars, seminars and TeachMeets were established. Personally, I have benefitted from many of those, and I have been a speaker in several of them as well. Meeting other ambassadors and exchanging experiences and ideas was an invaluable form of support. Just talking about how everyone is coping with the new situation has allowed me to see its advantages – an opportunity to change the way we teach. It also motivated me to support others, to organise more meetings of this ilk with teachers and to further exchange experiences. I teach chemistry, but I never limit myself to a circle of chemists or teachers of science subjects. For me, teachers of other subjects (especially at the early stages of primary school) are a mine of ideas. One of the examples from those meetings stuck in my head. It was a teacher who prepared a headband with rabbit ears and several other attributes related to the given book they were discussing during the class. She asked if it was too infantile to use such items for primary 4 pupils, and I thought to myself, wow, what a wonderful idea, why did not I come up with it? I have watched the teachers jointly find answers to every possible problem, sharing the solutions they have developed and supporting each other with kind words. We met regularly and you could see how our methods and activities, as well as forms of assessment, were evolving. We exchanged information about new apps and tools, enriching our own working methods. We also held discussions about future months, planning new tasks and activities.

Most of my own lessons were conducted on the Microsoft Teams platform with the use of very diverse methods: from traditional tutoring, when I was preparing material in the form of presentations, to interactive tasks for students and joint discussions about their implementation. These discussions were a wonderful experience and sometimes took an unexpected turn. For example, a lesson about drugs in a general secondary school once turned into a debate about a vaccine for COVID-19, which then provoked a discussion on the subject of various epidemics (including those from ancient times), such as the Spanish

Influenza and The Black Death, the methods of fighting them, the patterns of human behaviour, the duration of the epidemics and their impact on politics and economy. The remote form of work with the use of ICT gave us the opportunity to quickly confront our ideas with facts – we immediately searched for information, viewed materials found on the Internet and drew conclusions together. I felt fulfilled as a mentor and a guide, just as much as during traditional teaching. The homework assignments, designed in such way as to involve the whole family at home, were an instant hit. I would, for example, ask my students to perform an experiment, record an interview, create a paper and online game for younger siblings, analyse a home first aid kit or the composition of a household detergent, perform mathematical calculations of apartment dimensions and distances or to create their own camera obscura.

The very form of work through Microsoft Teams made every student feel like they were in the first-row seat. Everything was legible and visible, there were no distracting elements, such as the background hubbub of their chattering classmates. Initial jokes (such as switching off the microphone) quickly wore off, because other students got irritated and did not allow such behaviour. My students were very involved in those meetings, no matter what we were doing at any given point in time. The online games I participated in were very popular – it was a badge of honour to beat the teacher! We worked together, but I often made arrangements to speak to my students individually if they needed help with understanding particular topics or tasks.

After lessons, we were continuing the international eTwinning project, and in April we decided to launch another cooperation focused on pandemic reality. The main aim of the project was to exchange ideas on how to deal with the current situation and to support each other. We created many drawings, posters and information about COVID-19, and put together a cookbook. We also talked about our hobbies, showed off balcony garden projects, completed puzzles, created games and often met online. As a summary of the project, we created a story about our emotions in times of pandemic. However, the most important thing in all this was the atmosphere. There was no sense of loneliness or alienation. We were all together, here and now. While learning and having fun we would often forget about the stressful information and statistics that were being broadcasted on television. We learned humility, respect, sometimes we re-evaluated our own priorities by getting to know ourselves better, appreciating small things and gestures, and moments spent with our loved ones.

English language teacher, primary school

What was my plan for remote teaching during the pandemic?

The period of distance learning was both a difficult and interesting stage in the life of every teacher, student and parent. It posed new challenges – it required commitment, cooperation and quick learning on how to function in a virtual environment.

In order to quickly find my feet in this new situation and enrich my remote work skillset, I took part in the eTwinning online training seminars – *A Week with Web 2.0* and *A Week with English Teaching Tools*. The eTwinning project titled *Our New Technology Classroom* was also a great source of support. Knowledge of web applications, access to the platform, videoconferencing, along with project tasks all formed a good basis for conducting remote teaching.

My students were well used to the frequent use of ICT in the classroom (the school is equipped with laboratories, interactive whiteboards, robots, etc.). But due to the lockdown, many students were experiencing difficulties in accessing their own computers, the Internet, and often had to share equipment with siblings or parents. As a compromise, we decided to **combine traditional forms of education and modern technologies – so that each student could carry on with their education.**

The Poster MyWall App for creating virtual posters was the first of many handy tools I used. Thanks to its numerous features, I created resources in which I discussed issues from the core curriculum concerning the use of modal verbs, creating affirmative sentences, questions and negations. During the online lesson, using textbooks and exercise books, I familiarised students with the meaning and use of the verbs: should, can, may and must. Just like in the classroom at school, they asked questions and shared their observations. As part of the consolidation of the newly acquired knowledge and to use the language in practice, they designed (in groups or individually) posters on how to act during the COVID-19 pandemic, expressing their views on what they should, can, may or must do to avoid getting sick. In addition, I posted their work on the eTwinning platform as one of the project activities. Pupils had the opportunity to compare their work and the content sent by partners from Spain, Slovenia and Turkey. We were surprised that **despite national, cultural and religious differences, the outcomes were very similar – the topic of the pandemic was connecting us in joint activities.**

In order to communicate important information to my students, I often used Voki – an application which allows you to create a personalised avatar and record a voice message for the created character to present. I sent links to the messages via the digital class register. The students were surprised by this form

of communication, but such messages were more readily replayed and absorbed better than traditional forms of communication.

The Story Jumper supported me in teaching my students how to create and edit texts, which is a topic that most of them approach with apprehension. We chose it as the most student-friendly option after our eTwinning partner suggested that we could jointly create a book – a travel guide, inviting everyone to visit the countries participating in the project – Poland, Turkey, Slovenia and Spain. The pupils' task was to co-create the book by placing photographs and descriptions of the most interesting places in their country, region and town where the school is located. Everyone enthusiastically took up this task and strived to make their part of the guide stand out. They focused on the task, forgetting their fears of creating text and graphic materials by themselves. They worked with commitment both in small groups, as well as in a large international team.

Summarising the learned material during this period was one of the major challenges. Conducting independent revision from the textbook according to the teacher's instructions was perceived by students as boring and inefficient. Looking for a solution, I found an interesting tool for reviewing and creating thought maps – an internet platform called Miro. It allowed us to jointly (through a link generated by the teacher) collect the most important information in any chosen form, including graphics. By cooperating, the students added content and supplemented the ideas of their peers.

The applications which we have tested together during this extraordinary period will certainly be used by us in the future, and also during traditional classroom-based teaching.

History teacher, primary school, general secondary school

How do I use ICT and modern technology in my everyday work?

I always try to combine tradition with innovation, and use ICT tools as much as possible. I began using them in my teaching practice in 2015, when the school I work in started carrying out Erasmus+ KA1 projects. I began to use the tools I learned about during the international training sessions, but I also started looking for tools that would be useful specifically for the subject I teach and which would make the learning process more attractive for my students. I used the resources on eTwinning Live, participated in week-long online courses, webinars and learned through the implementation of eTwinning projects.

What was my plan for remote teaching during the pandemic?

While taking up the challenge posed by the lockdown, I felt well-prepared to conduct remote teaching activities, **which, in a sense, were a test of digital competencies for each of us.** Thanks to the project work I was equipped with a range of tools that I used in my work as an addition to the lessons, and which have now begun to form the basis of them.

I respect traditional forms of learning, but I am also very keen to intertwine and complement them with quizzes prepared with Kahoot! or Quizizz. I often prepared lesson materials using ThingLink; a tool for creating interactive posters. Depending on the subject, I utilised the Padlet board or the Popplet mind maps, while the Mentimeter has worked well with older students. Prezi has become my favourite tool, and I consider it a personal success that I have encouraged older students to use this application instead of Power Point. We also used ICT in the implementation of the various eTwinning projects (for primary 6 pupils, general secondary school students and members of the history club). Participation in the projects has brought measurable benefits during the period of distance learning. **Students participating in them coped better with modern technology and it was easier for them to adapt to the new education system.** On the other hand, Erasmus+ projects have helped to equip our classrooms and familiarise students with modern technology during the period of traditional, classroom-based teaching.

However, we have had other difficulties. Many students live in rural areas, where the biggest problem was the Internet connection – poor coverage, weak signal, network connection being overloaded, etc...

This was compounded by the activities of siblings, who also required access to the computer and Internet, which often meant that the equipment had to be shared. I had to choose the tools and methods to match the technical capabilities of my students. In this situation I asked myself two questions: What would I, as a student, expect from my teacher? How do I make sure that the lessons do not conflict with the timetable of my students' siblings', is it attractive and effective? The answer was simple: I would like to see and hear the teacher. I would like the material to be well explained, the lesson to be interesting and I would like to be able to access it at a time convenient for me. As a result, I developed interactive materials available for students on Google Classroom – a platform used by our entire school. Lessons included video recordings, created with the help of Prezi Video, a link to quizzes and homework, a visually attractive learning aid (for example: a poster) and a link to additional didactic video footage. I made sure that the materials were structured and well described. The method turned out to be practical, accessible – even for those less technically advanced, effective and appealing to students and parents.

Teaching is one thing, but the knowledge passed on also had to be verified and evaluated. Using Google Forms, I prepared electronic worksheets containing source texts, maps, etc. I also developed tests using the www.testportal.pl platform. In both cases, I received a detailed report of the results, which enabled me to make evaluations and allowed for potential modifications.

As a form teacher, I was also conducting online meetings with my students through the medium of Zoom video conferences. During those virtual meetings, we talked about the needs of my students, their expectations and about the joys and difficulties of distance learning. **I was also very surprised to discover that many of my students were lacking in independence. Many of them, including those who already possessed a high level of digital skills, waited for their parents to accompany them in the learning process, seemingly unable to start it on their own. The period of distance learning has showed which children treated computers as a toy, and for which of them it started to become a learning tool.** As a result, it was often necessary to involve the whole family in the process of distance learning. This was one of the major challenges of this extraordinary period. Distance learning was a sort of a test of a teacher's creativity, but also a test of students' independence, approach to learning and their commitment. Many parents also had the opportunity to observe how teachers conduct the classes, what materials and tasks their children receive, thereby allowing them to identify sources of learning difficulties, e.g. lack of concentration. **Many parents have realised the importance of contact and cooperation between home and school, regardless of the form of teaching.**

Maths teacher, primary school

How do I use ICT and modern technology in my everyday work?

Every adventure with education has its beginning. Mine started twenty years ago in a small village school. The first maths lesson I was going to carry out was for a composite class of twenty children, including eight pupils from primary 5 and twelve from primary 6. I was asking myself 'How to organise such a lesson?', 'How to make sure that the children will not waste time and lose interest while waiting between the activities'. I had hundreds of other questions and concerns. I was worried that if I ask someone for advice I will hear, *If you are not managing, maybe you should start thinking about a new job...*

What was my plan for remote teaching during the pandemic?

The situation we experienced in March 2020 reminded me of the early years of the teaching profession. Concerns, questions and uncertainty about what to do next. As deputy headteacher at my school, I have been the recipient of many of these questions, and I was already lacking answers to my questions regarding the way lessons should be conducted, the frequency of online meetings, the methods for assessing work, and problems with the lack of equipment in pupils' homes...

While looking for solutions and support in various groups, I found even more questions and offers from hundreds of training courses on the use of ICT tools. I felt like a kid in an amusement park who wants to try everything. Fortunately, I remembered the words of Jolanta Okuniewska: *Before you use a tool, ask yourself what is your goal, what do you want to achieve [...] Using technology only to make the lesson more attractive is not the point.*

The first week of remote teaching was very difficult. I started with a platform that I was familiar with from running webinars. It was free, I knew how to navigate it, but it proved to be too complicated for our purpose. After going through problems with logging in, it became clear that chat alone was not enough for students. Together with the students, we verified further proposals, finally settling for Zoom, which we tested together with a maths teacher from Opole, both from the point of view of the teacher and the **student**. The teaching staff accepted the idea and began to learn from each other about the functions and features of this programme.

We have closely examined the issues of students' access to equipment and the Internet. **We have also received support from the school supervising authority in the form of 13 laptops, which have improved our efforts.** Based on this information, we have developed a new timetable that takes into account the needs and capacities of the children – we could not allow for the accumulation of online lessons and the increase in the time our pupils spend in front of the monitor. **Step by step we started to find ourselves in a new reality.**

Pupils willingly participated in classes and performed tasks – some of them systematically, some under strict supervision of the staff. We paid attention not only to the implementation of the core curriculum, but above all, to the emotional state of everyone involved. **We launched a helpline for pupils, parents and teachers – a school psychologist was responsible for the operation of it.** Form teachers were organising online meetings with students, and **some classes kept an online Diary of Memories**, which was designed to involve students' families in the learning process.

Every Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. teachers would meet online. For us it was the virtual equivalent of the teachers' room. It was not mandatory – just an informal

meeting for those who wanted to catch up. It was an opportunity to share ideas and problems, not only work-related ones. Of course, there were also official teachers' meetings, including teacher-led training sessions on the following topics: Psychological aspects of distance learning, How to prepare a lesson using the Genial.ly platform, Google Tools in Education. Inter-disciplinary teams also met online, and, at the request of teachers, this form of meeting will be introduced on a permanent basis. Scheduled observations and open lessons were held without any problems. The student council remained active, organising various activities on the school's Facebook profile. We also carried on with the implementation of eTwinning projects, and we even joined some new ones. On the occasion of International Children's Day, we recorded a special video with best wishes for our pupils.

For several years now I have been a member of the Superbelfrzy RP group, whom I met during the Active Education project carried out by the Centre for Civic Education (CEO) in 2013. Since then, I have been looking for new educational solutions related to ICT. Combining education with passion, I found the website of the Copernicus Science Centre and the Young Explorers Club. At one of the conferences titled *Show – Convey [Pokazać – Przekazać]*, I met Jolanta Gradowska, who told me about eTwinning and the opportunities it opens up for teachers. Why am I telling you all this? Because **most of the training, projects and activities I undertake come from the recommendation of other teachers and educators – it is the result of our cooperation.**

German language teacher, general secondary school

What was my plan for remote teaching during the pandemic?

The end of the school year is always a time for summaries, analysis of performance, achievements, but also analysis of difficulties or failures. We have also used the above categories to evaluate the period of distance learning caused by the coronavirus pandemic. The beginnings, as ever, were not easy. However, teachers belong to one of those professional groups that always faces up to the task and with dedication they take appropriate action for the benefit of their students.

My first thoughts were: How can I carry on teaching German, to ensure that my students continue to develop their language skills without compromising any of them? After all, learning a foreign language requires contact with another person, interaction, dialogue, exchange of thoughts and views. A series of webinars on remote teaching organised by eTwinning,

Education and the LektorKlett publishing house helped me make my decision. During those webinars, I learned about the tools and methods that I then subsequently used in my work with students.

The platform I have chosen – Webex – played a major role in my endeavours. It was, above all, safe for the participants, it gave the opportunity for online contact between participants, allowed them to share materials stored on their computers, as well as Internet resources and multimedia. As a host, I was able to turn the students' microphones off and on, and there was a feature allowing students to report their willingness to speak during our discussions. I was able to record the lessons in case students wanted to review the content at a later date. We used both textbooks and online tools (Genial.ly, LearningApps, Padlet, Storyboard That, Slidetalk, Survio, Issuu) to motivate students and support the development of new skills.

I have very often used the experience of my fellow eTwinning ambassadors. We shared our observations and conclusions from our practices, improving our own competencies while doing so. Lesson scenarios, project descriptions or publications on www.etwinning.pl turned out to be helpful. The projects that are being implemented are a valuable source of knowledge, materials and inspiration. I often used them to prepare lessons. For instance, short films presenting the participants, their environment and friends are in fact an excellent tool to develop listening comprehension skills. Texts in the form of Power Point presentations, e-books, Storyboard (comics) or Padlet allowed them to exercise and develop reading comprehension skills. The survey 'How do you feel as a citizen of Europe?', conducted and analysed during the last eTwinning project, has proven to be an excellent tool for analysing statistics and graphs. My pupils concluded that our online lessons have given them a sense of a well-worked year. They felt that they absorbed the material well, which would allow them to continue their studies in subsequent years without any problems.

Distance learning has, however, brought with itself the challenge of verifying the progress made. While I was able to observe and assess my students' development during the online conversations, it was very difficult to assess the written assignments. I had reason to doubt whether the performed tasks were completed independently, or if the students had help from elsewhere. For this purpose, I used primarily PDFescape, which allowed me to minimise the reproduction of work. Feedback has also turned out to pose a challenge – there was not enough time to give it to each of the students in writing. I also felt that there was not much time for undertaking form teacher's duties. Communicating values and educating pupils is a long-term process for which direct contact is best.

My experience as an eTwinner implementing international projects has undoubtedly helped me get into the rhythm of remote teaching very quickly. After these few difficult months, I can safely say that **teaching online is no less effective than traditional learning at school. All we must do is choose the right tools and methods that take into account the needs and abilities of our students.** The results they have achieved during this time have given me a sense of well fulfilled duty.

English language teacher, primary school

How do I use ICT and modern technology in my everyday work?

A dozen or so years ago, when I started working in primary school, the most important thing for me was to carry out a lesson exactly as laid out in the textbook. I did every exercise, no matter how boring, from start to finish. It did not matter if I could sometimes notice fatigue on the faces of even the most diligent pupils. After all, practice makes perfect, doesn't it? Throughout this period, I knew that something was missing, but at the time I did not know exactly how to name it. Now I know that it was about digital competencies and the ability to use them in my professional work. I was able to make a simple multimedia presentation or use the Internet, but advanced methods and interesting tools were beyond my reach. As a result, I decided to change the type of facility I was working in, and, full of fear, I began work in a lower secondary school.

The new school was a breakthrough for me. I remember perfectly well when one day, at the beginning of the school year, the headteacher called me and my fellow English language teacher and asked: *Which one of you will take care of eTwinning and which one of you will run the Youth in Action programme?* I looked at my colleague with a puzzled expression on my face and answered – *I do not know what eTwinning is, but I will find out about it and I will give it a go.* It was a great choice! I started by participating in online courses in order to prepare myself, and then I entered my first eTwinning project by joining schools from Spain and Lithuania. I was learning from our partners, adding my own ideas over time and getting into the swing of it! Since then, I have been carrying out more and more projects, participating in online courses and winning Quality Labels. Young people, parents and management were content, the school held a reputation for being open to the world, with modern teaching methods going beyond the traditional model based solely on textbooks and notebooks. In 2014, I became an eTwinning ambassador, sharing my knowledge and experience with other teachers.

What was my plan for remote teaching during the pandemic?

These experiences gave me the skills and motivation to use ICT in my classes. I like to use the help of vocabulary applications such as Quizlet or Insta.ling, programmes such as Spelling Training as well as games like PurposeGames, Kahoot! or Quizziz. The right dosage adds variety to educational activities and enhances the learning process. But achieving the balance between the right amount of materials to send, the choice of appropriate methods and frequency of online activities at the beginning of the pandemic was not so easy. **On top of that, not all of the students took these activities seriously in the first few weeks, often ignoring tasks, messages or scheduled online meetings. Technical problems were also unavoidable – lost login details, hardware problems, poor internet connection, lack of a camera or a microphone. We had to act quickly so as not to discourage students who were already confused by the new reality.** I was constantly looking for new solutions that would be accessible, attractive and effective for students. The next eTwinning course *A Week with...* came to the rescue. Equipped with new skills, I started to prepare and send out lessons in Genial.ly, which was a much more interesting alternative to the task file and instructions typed up in a Word document. My students really liked it! Another well received endeavour was the development of lessons in the Nearpod application. It took a lot of time and work on my side, but it gave fantastic results. In this setup, each student was given an access code to the live-streamed lesson in Nearpod, typed in his or her name and was able to participate in the lesson and complete assigned tasks in real time. This allowed me to control the course of the lesson carefully, monitor the progress of the students during a particular exercise and play, talk, draw or write with them at the same time.

From time to time, I would set up live online quizzes for my students on the Quizziz App. They were eager to compete, while learning and reviewing the previously introduced material at the same time.

At the explicit request of the pupils, we also continued the eTwinning project that was initiated before the pandemic. We carried out the planned activities, adapting them to the technical abilities of the participants. It was a great way to put their knowledge into practice and it complemented the curriculum well. Parents, who for the first time had the opportunity to look at the work in the project, supervise and actually see the results of the cooperation, have played an important role in this undertaking. The project was a success, and the National Quality Labels were awarded in two of the participating countries.

Summarising all the methods and tools I used, the most valuable in remote teaching turned out to be videoconferencing, interactive online lessons, project-based work and quizzes, which helped stimulate students to learn

English. **The best results were obtained by trial and error. Therefore, a lot of attention should be paid to evaluation of the actions we take, to checking what students think about them and what results they bring. Together we will find the right solution.**

Early years education teacher, kindergarten

How do I use ICT and modern technology in my everyday work?

When Oswald Veblen was overseeing the work on the first computer, he did not anticipate that 64 years after the premiere of ENIAC, the computer would not be something extraordinary, and that the modern smartphone would fit in a pocket or a purse (for the unaware, the ENIAC took up a roomful of 42 cabinet racks!).

Today, the standard is supposed to be a digital teacher, digital student, digital school, e-books, apps, posts, search engines, distance learning, digital competencies... How to keep up with the latest developments in ICT?

Imagine a book character, Anne Shirley from *Anne of Green Gables*, applying for a teaching position at a school, and the first question the headteacher asks is, 'Are you a digitally competent person?' Our distracted, resolute Anne might answer, 'Yes. I am no stranger to knowing about digits'. In today's digital world, however, that is not enough. What if you were asked a similar question? You think to yourself: I handle a smartphone, I write monthly plans in Word, I use an electronic class register. Maybe there is much more you can do? Maybe just like me, Anne of the 21st century, you know how to prepare children to be digital citizens, and you adapt apps, computer programmes and Internet resources to your pupils' interests and abilities. You search and select information from various sources, use ICT in your teaching work, to build a team and to collaborate.

I am aware that the development of digital competencies is a continuous and individual process. That is why I am constantly expanding my knowledge in this field. I mainly use webinars, courses, training sessions and seminars provided by the eTwinning National Support Service. A large injection of professional and reliable knowledge, competent and creative lecturers and trainers, examples of good practice – these are just some of the advantages of participating in these events. In addition, other teachers, who share their knowledge and experience during eTwinning computer workshops I run, are a treasure house of knowledge for me.

Let us go back to our interview with Anne of Green Gables for a moment. Another question is asked, 'How do you use modern technology in your daily work?'. 'Well... Chalk, blackboard, pen, ink, abacus', Anne could reply.

And do I, Anne U., use ICT in my work? Allow me to reply straight away: Yes! ICT proved itself useful as a teaching aid: presentations of photographs, screenings of natural and geographical films, walks in virtual museums, galleries, castles. Based on my experiences, five years ago I developed an innovation titled *ICT in Kindergarten – Why not?* The kindergarten world of technical devices includes tablets (three of them, to be exact), an interactive whiteboard, a photo camera and a video camera. Tablets are used in various ways, including as a magnifying glass, a QR code reader, to operate apps like Kahoot!, Kodable, StoryJumper, Tagxedo or BlockCAD. The photo camera and the video camera are a valuable source of materials. Thanks to them, the pupils can keep a record of preschool celebrations, games and activities. Children also utilise this equipment to give interviews and prepare presentations as part of the activities carried out within eTwinning and Erasmus+ projects. An interactive whiteboard, in turn, means drawing, writing, painting, dragging images across the screen, putting together puzzles, coding, passing through labyrinths, as well as Skype calls with peers from Polish and European partner schools.

What was my plan for remote teaching during the pandemic?

Let us imagine that the job interview of Anne of Green Gables continues...

The last question is: 'How do you intend to conduct remote teaching?'

And this is the part where our Anne gets a little bit confused. Does this mean that she will have to run with her notebook and pen from home to home to teach her students? And has Anne of the 21st century managed to facilitate distance learning? **At the time of the introduction of distance learning due to the pandemic, I started an eTwinning project about online lessons in kindergarten, to which I invited two of my friends. It turned out to be a hit!**

The project was born out of the ideas and experiences of the teachers, and its main goal was to continue the implementation of the core curriculum. Our pupils are very young, so it was necessary to simplify the form and content of the classes in order to make them accessible, and above all achievable, under the new conditions. **Committed parents invested in cooperation provided great help and support in the implementation of this project.** The developed learning plans and activities were of an interdisciplinary nature. The physical area of the child's development comprised of various activities, including sets of gymnastics exercises and movement games for children, which were developed by teachers, or *Sports Alphabet*, a joint sports challenge for children (in Lino app), which was based on photos and descriptions prepared by the

children, and construction games, such as creating an animal farm. The activities covering the emotional area of a child's development were based on games created using several apps, including Wordwall and LearningApps. We also created a children's book titled *The Book of Good Wishes* (Flipsnack application), which was based on pre-schoolers' drawings. Our pupils were also learning to appreciate the emotional value of the natural environment through participation in an online painting event titled Meadow (FotoJet editor). The social area of development included online meetings with peers (Google Meet application), learning about the rights and responsibilities of children (Genial.ly presentation), also including the rights and responsibilities of disabled children (the World Autism Day), and respect for the values of others (#AkcjaŻonkile!). The cognitive area of a child's development included conducting experiments – natural soap bubbles, growing watercress, experiments with eggs, preparing water stations for insects, as well as getting to know the surrounding nature (e.g. learning interesting facts about bees – through the Lino application), solving puzzles based on children's artwork, as well as coding with the use of Kodable. **An extremely interesting part of our activities was the preparation of instructional videos which were made by children, for children.**

The epidemic did not stop our work on two European projects implemented by the kindergarten in cooperation with schools from Slovakia, Greece, Turkey and Italy. These projects show that new challenges, motivation, teachers' willingness to act and children's joy from the activities are able to blossom even during such serious problems as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Has Anne of Green Gables had a successful job interview? In the 21st century – I doubt it. Did I, Anne U., who has been carrying out remote teaching with the fullness of digital competencies? Decide for yourself if you would employ her.

1 Daffodils - a campaign to commemorate the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising.

Summary



Home

The vast majority of the respondents positively assessed the eTwinning offer addressed to Polish teachers. According to the respondents, the platform offers both knowledge and tools allowing better use of new technologies in education, also as part of distance education. The survey results show that eTwinning is not only seen as a tool that helped teachers prepare for teaching online, but also as a platform for establishing contact and collaboration between schools. It was emphasised that running eTwinning projects can contribute to the implementation of core curriculum and can encourage the activation of students reluctant to become involved in remote learning.

Although between March and June 2020 a significant increase in the number of new eTwinning users was not observed, the data on the activity on the platform shows that teachers who were constantly using its resources were eager to use the knowledge and tools available there. It can be said that eTwinning was a significant support for teachers in their remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic. Undoubtedly, the new offer adapted to the requirements of distance education during lockdown contributed to this. Yet, it should be mentioned that some of the respondents suggested that eTwinning support focuses more on this aspect and that more materials are available to help them with remote teaching of vocational subjects.

As part of the survey, recommendations were collected on how to better adapt the eTwinning platform to the needs of Polish teachers. In this context, it was proposed to add applications for creating and making educational materials more attractive and to improve the functionality of the TwinSpace meeting platform, including the option to use it for conducting classes in real time. Additionally, in order to better communicate and reach teachers with the offer, it was recommended that a newsletter with a short description of the most interesting materials available was issued. This would encourage teachers to visit the platform more often.

The results also show that teachers who actively use eTwinning display digital competencies and are familiar with modern technological solutions that help them conduct classes online. This is certainly due to the nature of eTwinning, as it is primarily addressed to teachers who carry out online projects and collaborate with other teachers and students from abroad. Many of the respondents admitted that remote teaching was not a big problem for them, because it was not their first contact with educational activities conducted over the Internet.

The biggest problems related to distance education mentioned by eTwinners concerned not so much the competencies gap, but the provision of hardware and software for teaching classes over the Internet. Teachers admitted that

the new situation they faced in recent months made them buy computers and programmes indispensable for remote teaching.

An important postulate raised by the respondents was the need to create a common platform for distance education, which would allow for the streamlining of the tools used and the systems for assessing student progress. In the opinion of the surveyed teachers, this would definitely facilitate their work and help them avoid problems resulting from the use of different tools by teachers working at the same school. In addition, the need for a uniform way of grading pupils was highlighted. In this context, there were also calls to expand the eTwinning platform offer with new tools and information on remote assessment of students' progress.



Home

Bibliography



Home

- Amielańczyk, M., Michniuk, A. and Śliwowski, K. (2020). *Nauczanie zdalne w Polsce*. Warszawa: Skriware.
- Biernat, M. (2020). *Edukacja zdalna w czasie pandemii. Raport z badań*. Warszawa: Fundacja Centrum Cyfrowe.
- Plebańska, M., Szyller, A. and Sieńczewska, M. (2020). *Edukacja zdalna w czasach COVID-19. Podsumowanie wyników badania Wydziału Pedagogicznego Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego*. Warszawa: Wydział Pedagogiczny Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego.
- Sobiesiak-Penszko, P. and Pazderski, F. (2020). *Dyrektorzy do zadań specjalnych – edukacja zdalna w czasach izolacji*. Warszawa: Fundacja Rozwoju Społeczeństwa Informacyjnego – Instytut Spraw Publicznych.



Home



Home

The report presents the results of the first eTwinning user survey that was carried out at a specific time: the COVID-19 pandemic, just after the end of the 2019/2020 school year. Therefore, in addition to the survey results, the publication also includes eTwinning ambassadors comments on the ways they coped with remote learning in this difficult time as well as on the implementation of eTwinning online projects and the way it has affected their knowledge of online tools and their digital competencies.

Foundation for the Development of the Education System (FRSE) is the Polish National Agency for the Erasmus+ Programme for the years 2021–2027. It is also responsible for other European educational and information initiatives in Poland, such as eTwinning, Eurodesk, Eurydice, Europass, EPALE and EVET. The Foundation also supports co-operation with countries in the East via the Polish-Lithuanian Youth Exchange Fund, the Polish Ukrainian Council of Youth Exchange and the SALTO-EECA Eastern Europe and Caucasus Resource Centre. Since 2014, FRSE has been involved in the implementation of the Operational Programme Knowledge Education Development (PO WER). The Foundation organizes many educational events including competitions promoting projects' results. It coordinates the European Youth Week and co-organizes events in the framework of the European Day of Languages. It also conducts research. The Publishing House of FRSE issues, among others, such quarterly periodicals as "Języki Obce w Szkole" ("Foreign Languages at School") and "Europa dla Aktywnych" ("Europe for the Active").