



## **The Use of ICT In 3rd Cycle of Primary Education: an Exploratory Study in Vila Real City, Portugal**

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### **Abstract**

A descriptive and exploratory investigation was carried out to examine the use of ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) according to student and teacher perspectives. Two self-completion questionnaires were used to collect data. Students were selected from two classes from the 3rd cycle in two schools from Vila Real, a city located in Northeast of Portugal. Questionnaires were administered in January 2010. The sample comprised 111 students and 26 teachers.

The results show that almost all students (99.1%) have computer equipment at home. The computer is, particularly, used at home on school work preparation for Project Area discipline. To prepare these works is, also, very frequent the use of Internet and most students spend more than 1 hour per week online. All students surveyed attended classes where they use ICT. PowerPoint, Word and Internet Explorer were computer applications more used by students.

Despite incipient teacher education in computer science, computer is widespread within professors for personal and professional use. Professionally, computer is used to make exams and worksheets, to send and receive e-mail and browse in the Internet. ICT is used by most teachers, although, more frequently in the Project Area discipline. The most frequently used programs are Word, PowerPoint, Excel and Internet Explorer in which knowledge levels are good or acceptable. Professors consider that formation and training are needed in some computer programs like Moodle, multimedia educational programs, among others. Teachers believe that, the use of ICT in educational context makes their job more interesting and simple. However, the teacher's lower level of knowledge in ICT, the lack of technical resources, the existence of extensive and inflexible programs are major obstacles to integrate and use of ICT in the classroom.