



SCHOOL CASE STUDY

Ataturk Primary School

School name	Ataturk Primary School
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Website	http://bucakata.meb.k12.tr
Age of students	7-11
Number of staff	43
Area of focus	Integration of ICT in classrooms

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Background, Context and Drivers to change

The **Little Explorers FCL** was established within the scope of the "Little Explorers" project carried out at Burdur Bucak Atatürk Primary School, with the aim of improving students' social, physical and mental skills and integrating ICT into their education processes. Using Web 2.0 tools, students' imaginations are activated. Various skills of students are developed in these learning areas with 3D tools, LEGO Education sets, wooden design sets, coding robots and intelligence games sets.

The aim was to go beyond the ordinary, raise the school's standards and increase students' success. By introducing technology into the classroom environment, the target was to ensure that students not only access content, but also create content. In this way, each of our students would have reached technological literacy. Each student's level of readiness and learning pace were different. Accordingly, activities were arranged according to different student learning speed and levels in different learning zones. Our school strategy was to ensure that all students learn effectively. Moreover, the space was designed to provide a relaxing, inspiring, and stimulating environment. During the planning and design phase, we ensured that students, teachers, ICT teacher(s), families and administrators were involved.

Flexible/innovative learning environment

Little Explorers FCL covers a part of our school. But our school policy is to spread this throughout the school over time. There are the zones of collaboration, create, present, interact, exchange and develop in the learning environment. While creating these zones, vivid colours and comfortable ergonomic furniture were preferred. The smart board, safe internet, green screen, tablets, voice recorder, laptop and microscope were used. In this learning laboratory, students can conduct scientific research with experiment sets. Sound recordings and drama activities are carried out in the green screen area. There are cabinets for storing items to use and students' personal belongings. We have also placed boards and boxes where students can easily express their ideas.

We have designed environments where students can work face-to-face to enable effective communication. Ergonomics and flexibility are also important for space design. While a group of students is doing role play activity, another group can watch YouTube videos or listen to songs via headphones, and another group can search on digital library about the lesson. Sometimes, teachers and students have discussions by creating a circle of the entire class.

"Be less classic, more flexible and active."

Arzu Kepez, English Teacher

Student-centred pedagogy

The Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) supported the project both financially and at the development stage. At PTA meetings, we talked about the classical learning method limiting today's students, preventing critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, communication and leaving them in a passive position. And it was decided that we could find the solution with active learning and innovative methods in flexible learning environments. Then, the school administration identified needs of students and teachers. The students said that they wanted more comfortable furniture, easier access to the internet, and a lot of Brain Training Games in the classroom. Teachers wanted a smart board, a large teaching-learning area and plenty of materials.

Teachers implement flipped learning as student-centred pedagogy. For example, they don't give homework, but they make students curious by making a brief statement on the next topic. Students watch videos on the subject they will learn, conduct research on the internet, prepare questions on the subject. By the time they get to class, they already have the foreknowledge. They have a lot of questions to ask. They help each other through peer coaching by asking and answering questions. During peer and group work, the teacher can spend more time with students who need individual education more. In addition, our teachers who received their training taught students how to use web 2.0 tools, how to code, how to access accurate information by conducting research from the internet, and about the Brain Training games. In this way, students become more autonomous, critical thinkers, researchers and problem-solvers.

“Seeing students who have more fun and are happier every day shows how important an innovative and flexible learning environment is.”

Fatma ER, Primary School Teacher

Use of technology

The learning environment was expanded out of school by organizing online discussions and chats with apps such as Zoom, Adobe Connect and Microsoft Teams beyond school days and hours. Forums and blogs were created by our teachers, and YouTube videos have allowed us to stay connected constantly. The stage created with the green curtain ignited the entrepreneurial spirit of all the students. Our students, who had a lot of fun shooting movies and clips, were more active and made more effort to learn, develop and create.

Students who only watched the projector in the classic traditional classroom became more active and creative with the use of a smart board in FLE. For example, they designed logos and posters in projects by using Web 2.0 tools. They created mind maps in classes. They had real-life rivals with competitions such as jeopardy and Quizizz on their tablets at the same time. It was difficult for students to experience some real-life experiences. Yet, when teachers use information and communication technologies, the situation changes. For example, teachers and students were able to experience different weather conditions with VR glasses.

In addition, with video footage and simulations, students were able to present the environmental impact of earthquakes and volcano eruptions more effectively.

“Information and communication technologies, the most fun way of learning. Autonomous student, permanent learning and collaborative classes are the main factors to make a difference in education.”

Senay, KURT, Principal

Impact

Benefits

- Future Classroom Lab inside and outside the school has brought the school into the spotlight with flexible learning environments, innovative pedagogy and the use of technology.
- Our teachers have had the opportunity to upskill themselves on technology, classroom management and new teaching methods.
- We saw a noticeable increase in students’ creativity and entrepreneurship.
- Interaction among our students has increased. We have made great progress in empathy, group work, and responsibility awareness.
- We have made more social activities like exhibitions, and we have produced more educational materials with students in the FLE.
- Some parents and institutions have begun to provide both moral and material support, as they see that a flexible educational environment is more beneficial to students.

Challenges

- Because we had limited space, all classes and teachers did not have the opportunity to use it at the same time.
- We don't have enough material to use. Not every student can do the same activity at the same time. For example, we do not have enough green screen and smart boards for all students.
- Learning time can be limited. Our teachers who have been trained in certain areas support students who want to continue their education after the course. For example, brain training games, information technology, foreign language, drama, music, robotic coding.
- It is difficult to control larger groups in FLE. Collaboration and exchange may cause noise and classroom management problems. But we have overcome these problems with headset use and cloud sharing options.

Other impact

Our students use web 2.0 tools actively, and they produce some remarkable videos. For example, our video about environmental pollution has received very good reactions. In the design and skills department, the nests and shelters we designed for street animals and placed around our school have had a positive impact on the personal development of our students. You can find the links of the videos below:

- <https://www.facebook.com/1950637495249566/posts/2208162846163695/>
- https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=958510381169739&extid=CL-UNK-UNK-UNK-AN_GK0T-GK1C



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