

Final Report of Professional Development Activity

undertaken by

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How The Need Was Identified

The Continuing Professional Development Activity undertaken by myself was to identify and develop opportunities and good practice for I.C.T. in school. Holy Cross Primary School is a rural primary school, with four full time teaching staff. All staff has taken part, successfully in the N.O.F. Training Programme, and were aware that although familiar with the software that was available in school, full advantage of it's potential was not being taken. With the appointment of a new Principal, an audit was carried out, which only seemed to reinforce the need for the development of I.C.T. pupils needed more opportunities to use I.C.T. in their daily learning experiences and teachers needed to deepen their confidence in using I.C.T. through future training and development.

What The Activity Proposed

It was proposed, therefore, to:

- investigate the use of interactive whiteboards in the Primary School arena
- locate websites for pupil learning
- set up a school website

These aims would be fulfilled by

- visiting primary schools already employing an interactive whiteboard in their day to day teaching
- visiting Showrooms to view the possible uses of an interactive whiteboard system
- meeting with a website advisor, to view structure of other school's websites
- investigate through the internet, a variety of suitable websites for pupil learning and integrate into present resources

Improved Practice by Teacher

With the conclusion of the C.D.P. Activity, and now with the prospect of the introduction of an interactive whiteboard to our school, and having been informed of the contribution such a resource would have on our establishment, all our staff are inspired with the boundless possibilities that will be open and more accessible to themselves and their pupils. All staff are more ready to incorporate I.C.T. across the different curriculum areas and in school planning. They now have the confidence to meet the challenge of the new curriculum and the ability to employ both old and new resources more effectively. The enthusiasm of the teachers has permeated down to the youngest of children in our school, who now are more open and eager for learning using a complimentary medium.

Our school website has been set up on, www.holycross.ik.com All teachers have been involved in the setting up of this website, and are able to edit the site to suit each classes individual needs. It is envisioned that, through the links established within this site, teachers will set homework tasks for their pupils and parents and other visitors to the site will be able to contact the school using email.

With the establishment of our website, all staff have become familiar with the use of a newly purchased digital camera. The use of this piece of equipment is very much evident on the school website, introducing visually, staff members and a dairy of events that have taken place over the recent months.

Improvement in Pupil's Learning Experience

Having visited other schools, the very positive effect on pupil learning after the installation and use of an interactive white board has been obvious.

An interactive whiteboard is a very effective viewing solution as it avoids crowding children around a small computer screen. At a very basic level, the teacher can demonstrate a programme or activity using the interactive whiteboard and then the pupils can copy and complete the activity unaided, using a P.C. therefore, reducing teacher demonstration time.

The bright colourful graphics that are presented encourage attention and reaction, bringing lessons to life. Even teacher led activities give opportunities for demonstration, interaction and discussion, with increased attentiveness from previous restless children. A whole class lesson can develop very easily to group work. These group activities, build up the confidence, not only of the less able child, but also the reluctant teacher.

Pupils, who may not have Internet access readily available, can be introduced to relevant sites through teacher led activities; they can then explore these sites together and then, again build up confidence as they transfer knowledge to P.C.

Evaluation of Activity

This P.D.A. will be deemed successful when each and every member of the teaching staff, are using I.C.T. readily, effectively and confidently across all the different curriculum areas and in school planning, and have the confidence to meet the 'challenge of change,' in the new revised curriculum head on and to employ both old and new resources effectively.

Pupils will become more enthusiastic in their learning environment; they will be more open to receiving and retaining information presented through the use of I.C.T. They will become more independent in their learning and in completing the tasks presented to them and communicate more readily, not only with their peers and teachers, but also with pupils and teachers of other learning establishment through email.

Sharing of Experience, Skills and Knowledge

The information received during this P.D.A. has been shared with other members of staff through a series of meetings. As Holy Cross has a small staff, these meetings were conducted informally.

After each visit to either school or showroom, a report was presented to the staff highlighting important issues; photographs were displayed; portraying the use of interactive whiteboards in local schools, promotional literature from whiteboard installation companies giving details of what they each had to offer our school was distributed and visits were made to relevant websites that had been set up and developed by the school that was visited. Discussions were held, and many queries were answered (to the best of my ability.)

Value And Effectiveness Of The Activity

I thoroughly enjoyed the experience of taking part in the P.D.A. The whole programme was both beneficial and rewarding. I was given the opportunity to visit schools and sales establishments, to benefit from their experiences and advice, and on the basis of the information gleaned make a decision together with my colleagues on what would best benefit our school.

I was presented with opportunities to observe other teachers working on an interactive whiteboard, talk to them on their personal experiences, listen to the advice that they gave on its use and take onboard their opinions on its benefits, to both pupils and teachers.

I also had the opportunity to visit a school that had recently set up a website. Once again I was able to benefit from their experiences, good and bad, and investigate the routes they explored while getting their site established. They gave me advice on how to contact a server and which sever they felt gave best service to a small school.

Having received sales literature from many interactive whiteboard installation companies, I was actually able to visit such a company and was given a very comprehensive demonstration of everything that is possible when using an interactive whiteboard in the classroom.

The whole P.D.A. gave me the opportunity to meet and sustain contact with people who I otherwise would never have met. These individuals have contributed to, not only my personal professional development, but to the development of both staff and pupils of the school in which I teach.

Thank you to:
Kilkeel Primary School
Sacred Heart Primary School, Dundrum
S.O.S Group, Belfast

Future Plans

Holy Cross Primary School has now made arrangement for the installation of two interactive whiteboards, which has been made possible through the funds raised by our very loyal P.T.A. One of these boards is to be placed in a KS1 room and the other in a KS2 room. The installation company is offering a training programme for all staff on the use of the interactive whiteboards and their accessories, and everyone is very keen to avail of this programme. The school timetable will be organized so that each class has an equal allocation of time for the use of these boards.

The school website will be continued to be updated on a regular basis, with the involvement of both teachers and pupils. It is envisaged that KS2 pupils will undertake a History Project, collecting old photographs, information and data relating to the school and it's establishment and development and place them on our website.

Staff and pupils have benefited greatly from the involvement in this P.D.A. With the conclusion of this activity and with the implementation of these plans, the school will continue to develop and benefit for many years to come.

