

Build a Professional Learning Community

Page Index

[Description](#)
[Participants](#)
[Findings](#)
[Outcomes](#)
[Impact](#)
[Related Documents](#)

Quick Links

[Download Infosheet](#)
[Download Report](#)
[Visit Website](#)

Project Title	Utilising Information and Communication Technologies to Build a Professional Learning Community to Enhance the Learning Outcomes of Teachers and Students in Regional and Rural Schools in NSW and ACT
Project Team	Dr Carolyn Broadbent, Dr Maureen Boyle (Australian Catholic University), Dr Jo Brady (SiMERR ACT), Ms Thea van Os (Catholic Education Office, Canberra/Goulburn Diocese), Mr Michael Philpot (Sacred Heart Central School, Cootamundra), Mr Dennis Sleight (St Anne's School Temora), Ms Maree Willsmore (St Mary's School Young), John O'Brien (mentor teacher), Chris Beerworth (mentor teacher), Elaine Bambridge (mentor teacher), Alison Marks (mentor teacher).
Period	August 06 – September 08
Funding Agency	SiMERR
Organisational Base	SiMERR ACT

Description

[↑ Top](#)

This project utilises ICT to build a professional learning community in order to enhance the learning outcomes of teachers and students in regional and rural schools in NSW and the ACT.

This project has two key components:

- Investigation of the impact on the teaching and learning process following the introduction of interactive whiteboards into the classrooms at St Francis Xavier School, Lake Cargelligo, NSW; and
- Investigation of the development of teachers' knowledge, skills and sense of self-efficacy through the establishment of a professional learning community that supports the use of the information and communication technologies across selected schools in a rural and urban setting.

The project focuses on the development of quality pedagogy, teacher support through peer mentoring, and increased levels of student engagement in the learning process. Communication has been facilitated through the use of email and other forms of on-line interaction. Linking teachers across schools with postgraduate education students at Australian Catholic University, Canberra provides another dimension to the project.

Face-to-face forums have been held to support teachers' professional learning and facilitate the sharing of ideas and expertise. Teachers volunteered to videotape a number of interactive whiteboard (IWB) lessons and these were used by the participants for discussion and analysis. Best practice was identified and shared by the teachers using small discussion group techniques.

The project included five full-day and several after-school professional development forums. Data was collected using interviews with 15 teachers involved in the project, and focus group interviews of students in Kindergarten and Years 1-6, taught by these teachers.

Participants

[↑ Top](#)

Three staff members from Australian Catholic University; three CEO (Canberra/Goulburn) personnel; 50 teachers from the following schools: St Francis Xavier Primary Lake Cargelligo NSW; Trinity Catholic Primary Murrumburrah NSW; Sacred Heart Central School, Cootamundra NSW; St Michael's Primary Kaleen ACT; St Thomas Aquinas Primary, Charnwood ACT; Rosary Primary School, Watson ACT; St Mary's, Young NSW; St Anne's Central School, Temora NSW.

Findings

[↑ Top](#)

The qualitative data gathered from the discussion and interview groups suggests that using an IWB facilitates curriculum integration and the development of information and communication technology skills. Teachers at the forums indicated that

the IWB enhances competency in literacy and numeracy, encourages deep engagement in learning, and strengthens visual learning processes.

Outcomes

[↑ Top](#)

- Establishment of effective professional relationships between teachers within and across rural and regional schools.
- Development of ICT skills by teachers through professional engagement and sharing of resources.
- The value of the full day forums in building support and a sense of community.
- Emergence of spontaneous mentoring between early career teachers and established practitioners, especially those with expertise in the use of IWBs.
- Development of IWB web-based learning resources by ACU National pre-service teachers for use by teachers in schools.
- The development of shared digital materials, IWB flip charts and teaching resources.
- The establishment of a Western Region information technology online sharing site.
- Broadbent, C., Boyle, M. & Brady, J. (2007, September). Using ICT to connect rural and regional communities in Australia. Paper presented at the 5th PASCAL International Conference on lifelong learning. Pecs, Hungary.

Impact

[↑ Top](#)

This project has led to the development of an effective professional community of practice and an emerging on-line support network that provides access to current resources and professional learning opportunities. The network assists teachers to use and integrate information and communication technologies in their classrooms, with a particular focus on enhancing pedagogical knowledge in the use of interactive whiteboards.

Studying the impact of the use of IWBs at St Francis Xavier School, Lake Cargelligo provided insights regarding the specific needs of teachers and students in a remote school setting. This had relevance to the improvement and enhancement of learning at other rural and remote schools, with particular application to schools with Indigenous students.

Increased collaboration between the CEO (Canberra/Goulburn), Australian Catholic University, schools and teachers worked effectively to build a sustainable professional learning community focused on the development of quality pedagogy and innovatory practices in schools that promotes effective and equitable learning for all students.

Related documents

[↑ Top](#)

Click [here](#) to download this infosheet.

Click [here](#) to download the report on this project.

Click [here](#) to visit this project's website.

[↑ Top](#)