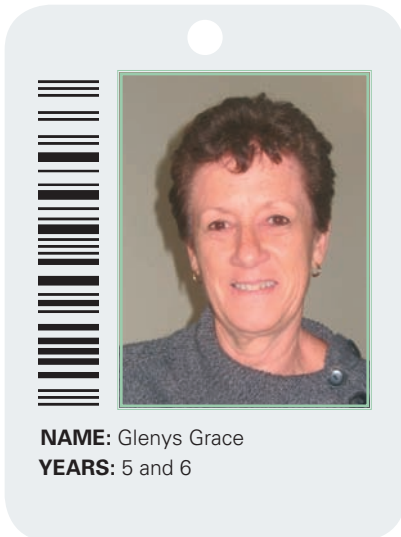


# Ask the teacher



How are others bringing technology into their classrooms? *INTERFACE* talks to three teachers at Kaeo Primary School about their experiences using ICT.



**NAME:** Glenys Grace  
**YEARS:** 5 and 6

## How are you currently using ICT?

We have access to an interactive whiteboard, a COW – affectionately named Daisy by the children – comprising 15 laptops, a good digital camera (with the option of borrowing from other classrooms if needed), a video camera, four standalone computers, and my teacher laptop. We use Word, Publisher, PowerPoint, KidPix, and Photo Story, and the Internet and email are tools we use daily. We have KnowledgeNet, so children have their own pages, which they develop similar to a personal website, and where they also create blogs, comment in forums, etc. The Internet is their #1 research tool.

This ICT is an integral part of our day and used in the classroom programme wherever possible. The IAW is used as a whiteboard, to demonstrate, for research, to teach, for individuals, groups and whole class as needed. Children also have their own folders on our school server. At the end of the year, they can have a disk burnt of their work/photos/art as part of their own personal portfolio.

## What's your most recent use in the classroom?

The interactive whiteboard has brought change and huge engagement into the classroom arena. It's a great assessment tool where we can bring up student's work saved to their folders for viewing and critiquing.

## WHAT IS PHOTO STORY?

Created by Microsoft, this is a free application that allows users to create a 'show-and-tell' presentation from their digital photos, including adding effects, music and narration.

[www.microsoft.com/photostory/](http://www.microsoft.com/photostory/)

## What are the best and worst things about using technology?

**Best:** What it offers – the limitless possibilities in all curriculum areas; the level of engagement of all students. They're so willing and able to try new things that they become teachers and support each other's learning! They are the ones who tap the potential more, as they see beyond the obvious. As a teacher who has been in the job a while – and as one who did not know how to turn on a computer a few years back – it has revitalised my teaching and changed my focus. I'm a learner alongside my students.

**Worst:** Power cuts and breakdowns! The distance and cost of support. Finding the time to research suitable sites for learning areas. Many of my students don't have the same access to the hardware and software at home and sometimes, as they move on, they don't get to maintain the usage and accessibility to ICT. Setting too many goals and not completing it all. I need to be more selective!

## What would you like to do more?

Develop knowledge and familiarity of all the tools available within the interactive whiteboard; to develop the use of the video camera; to find suitable sites, programmes, and activities that support learning; and to fully acknowledge and assess the work students do, and save in their folders.

## What would you like more information on?

How other teachers use their IWBs. How to efficiently and quickly access the websites and sort out what is suitable.

## What's the future hold for technology in education?

ICT is the future – who knows what will be next but our children need to be able to access and keep up to date with tools and trends. I think there is a need for the Ministry to support this and target more funding to allow schools to access and maintain the tools and people support needed to provide our children full and equal access.



**NAME:** Stephanie Campbell  
**YEARS:** 3, 4 and 5

**How are you currently using ICT?**

We use a digital camera to capture images of all school events, and then create photo stories and other pieces of work. We use the Internet to research topics, and find music and sound to put into slideshows. Every week we pull out the COW laptops and publish or create documents using a variety of Microsoft tools. I've just had an IAW installed and use it for most of the day. My knowledge of the millions of options is still limited but the children and I explore together, and are learning new ways of utilising it. All of my planning is done on a computer and many resources are sourced online.

**What's your most recent use in the classroom?**

We have been doing a topic based on the Olympics. Many of the class didn't get to watch the events, so we started each day using the IAW to watch the highlights of various sports and medal ceremonies, and read articles in *The New Zealand Herald*.

**What are the best and worst things about using technology?**

**Best:** The access to an endless supply of resources available. The IAW has opened a whole new world – all the class can access the Web at once, and it also enables us to save every piece of work done and come back to it at the touch of a button.

**Worst:** Experiencing technical difficulties during a lesson that is reliant on technology to make it happen.

**Would you like to do more?**

I would love to do more with cameras and video. I would love to try Skype.

**What would you like more information on?**

Absolutely everything! It's always useful to hear what others have already tried that worked well (and didn't).

**What's the future hold for technology in education?**

I see technology as being an avenue which challenging children can have a greater opportunity for success and to show their creativity.



**NAME:** Helen Piesse  
**YEARS:** 2 and 3

**How are you currently using ICT?**

The children have access to three computers, which are on a rotation system throughout the week. During their maths and reading times, they access Internet activities based on what we are currently learning about. Sometimes they publish stories using Kidpix and take photos to share with the class. We also have a projector that's been an asset when teaching how to use new programs or to share information from the Net.

**What's your most recent use in the classroom?**

The BBC's schools website ([www.bbc.co.uk/children/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/children/)) has been my favourite, user-friendly site. There's a range of poems that we have used for shared reading, with relevant activities that can be done independently. I usually share the poem with the children on a Monday morning, using the projector, and then we work through the activities together.

**What are the best and worst things about using technology?**

**Best:** The access to infinite information.

**Worst:** Not having the time to sift through great websites; when technology breaks down then you have to quickly rework your plans; and the lack of time for training.

**Would you like to do more?**

Explore what there is on the Internet for use in the classroom.

**What would you like more information on?**

How to get the most from my children when they're learning to use new programs, and peer teaching others.

**What's the future hold for technology in education?**

Infinite possibilities! Hopefully more training time for teachers out of the classroom, so that they are better equipped to develop children's ICT skills and knowledge.

WE THANK GLENYS, STEPHANIE AND HELEN FOR SHARING THEIR THOUGHTS WITH US. ▲



If you're like Stephanie and would like to try Skype, check out our **Two-Minute Guide** on page 28.



**DROP US A LINE**

If you'd like to comment on this article or participate in a future 'Ask the teacher', drop us a line:

[comment@nz-interface.co.nz](mailto:comment@nz-interface.co.nz) or [www.nz-interface.co.nz](http://www.nz-interface.co.nz)