Getting started with ICT in the new school year

If you are one of the 3,500 teachers who participated in an NCTE summer course you will have been introduced to a range of technologies, resources and ideas on how to use these in the classroom. Or indeed you may have attended one of the many other summer courses which integrated the use of ICT in teaching and learning. Either way you may be wondering where to start with all these ideas and what is available to support you on your journey of integrating ICT.

To help you get started, here are some of the technologies covered in NCTE’s summer course programme and some ideas on how they can be applied in the classroom.

The visualiser
- Artefacts: use the visualiser to show small artefacts on the big screen.
- Handwriting: demonstrate writing in a copybook, while it is displayed on the big screen.
- Sorting activities using concrete materials: start a lesson by demonstrating a sorting activity under the visualiser. Use the visualiser again for assessment at the end of the lesson.
- Visual arts: children show their art work to the class, ‘Artist’s Chair’.
- Kim’s game: play it under the visualiser so children can see the objects easily on the board.
- Children with special educational needs (SEN): record processes which they can play back at home or at school to help them with certain tasks.

Digital storytelling
- Procedural writing: children take pictures of the steps of an activity (e.g. making a sandwich). Compile these in order and add text and narration to create a piece of procedural writing with visuals.
- Sequencing: children sort pictures into sequence to create a story incorporating text and narration.
- Poems: children choose a favourite poem and illustrate it line by line, adding text/narration and music (children can use their own scanned artwork).
- Shape hunt: children take pictures of shapes around the school and create a commentary on their shape hunt, incorporating the names and descriptions of the shapes found (name, number of sides, edges, corners etc).
- SEN: create visual cues, incorporating text and audio for accessibility.

Skype
- Interviews: interview an author, a farmer, a grandparent or an Olympics 2012 athlete.
- Data: collect survey data from other classes without having to travel.
- Brain teaser: Skype other classes with a weekly maths brain teaser.
- Poems/songs: perform a poem, song or other activity for another class/school.
- Other countries: Skype a class in another country and interview them about school and daily life.
- eTwinning: considering using Skype to communicate with other schools as part of an eTwinning project (www.etwinning.net/).
- Accessibility: children with visual impairments can use Skype’s audio functions, while there is a writing function which can be used by children with hearing impairments.

ICT in the classroom PDFs
If you would like more ideas on these and other technologies, a range of PDFs are available at the link below. These PDFs cover the use of technologies to support literacy, numeracy, assessment and SEN and provide links to useful online resources, including a range of video tutorials.


Good practice videos
If you would like to see the technologies in action, have a look at the good practice videos which show teachers in Irish classrooms using a range of technologies to support teaching and learning. Popular videos include:
- Using a visualiser in a primary classroom – www.ncte.ie/GoodPractice/Videos/#22048.
- Recording audio using Audacity (as Gaeilge) – www.ncte.ie/GoodPractice/Videos/#20659.

Interactive whiteboard literacy videos
The IWB literacy videos focus specifically on the creation of interactive literacy activities using the IWB. The ‘magic box’ is an example of one of these videos – www.ncte.ie/GoodPractice/Videos/#20659. To access all eight IWB videos logon to www.ncte.ie/GoodPractice/Videos/Primary.

Next steps
Consider playing some of the above videos as part of an informal CPD session in your school or at a staff meeting. Or, if you would like to develop your skills and explore further uses of these technologies in the classroom, you might check out www.ncte.ie/training and:
- Attend an ICT course in your local Education Centre.
- Register for a free NCTE online course (www.ncte.ie/onlinecourses).
- Request a support group as a follow on to your summer course – contact your local education centre.
- Organise funded whole school training either in your own school or in your local education centre (minimum of 10 teachers required).

We wish you the very best of luck exploring the possibilities for ICT in the year ahead!

Madeleine Murray, National Coordinator, NCTE, (now part of the Professional Development Service for Teachers – PDST).