Just as ICT devices are now so much a part of the personal lives of our school-going population, many teachers are also introduced to new uses of ICT for personal reasons in the first instance. The need for such skills and knowledge often arises during the summer holidays, whether it’s to keep in touch with family and friends abroad through email and Skype, learn how to use a digital camera or keep up with the latest in mobile devices and social media. It is therefore no surprise that many teachers’ choice of summer course is one that includes ICT.

**Summer courses**

Summer courses often provide the perfect opportunity to raise awareness of and learn new ICT skills, but crucially, they are learnt in the context of how to use these skills in the classroom.

Course evaluations from 167 NCTE summer courses last year show that the majority of teachers believe that their ICT skills have increased substantially following their participation in the course, from beginner to basic level or from basic to intermediate level and beyond.

There is no doubt that participants are keen to make good use of the time spent and to enjoy themselves while so doing. One of the participants on the summer course ‘Creating and Using ICT Resources for Literacy’ commented that it was an “excellent course with loads of information that I will use in my classroom. Lovely relaxed atmosphere in the room as everyone was able to work to their own ability on the given tasks.”

**Sharing**

With all but 40 minutes of the school day spent in the company of children, the opportunity to meet colleagues and have professional discussions in a relaxed environment is both enjoyable and valuable. This has been one of the most frequently commented upon aspects of ICT summer courses through the years.

One participant on the ICT summer course for junior class teachers in 2012 said that their tutors “made this face-to-face course fun, interactive, interesting and very stimulating.” Another said that “this was a very enjoyable course where there were great ideas... I gained resources from both the course tutors and participants.”

The tutors echo the importance of sharing with fellow teachers, with one saying: “I brought in visualisers from my own school and this was really well received. I felt participants really appreciated when I could speak from my own experiences.”

**Videos and tips for teachers**

You can sample the course content by taking a look at some of the good practice videos included in these courses. They are available on the website of PDST Technology in Education (formerly NCTE) – (see links below). The skills demonstrated in these videos feature in the courses, ideas on their use are explored and experiences/tips from other teachers discussed.

More course content is available on this website in a series of pdfs on ICT in the classroom. They contain links to a host of further resources including video tutorials and tips for teachers.

**Summer courses available this year**

The former NCTE is now known as PDST Technology in Education and it is continuing to provide summer courses through the education centres. It also provides an online summer course through TeacherCPD.ie, its online learning facility.

So what’s available this year? There are about 200 instances of four face to face courses nationwide, together with 1,300 places on one online course.

**Face to face**

- Creating and Using ICT Resources for Literacy
- Using ICT for Literacy and Numeracy

**NEW! Using Tablets and Online Tools for Literacy and Numeracy**

Online

- Using the Interactive Whiteboard to Support Literacy (online)

And what do they cover? All are practical courses where participants are one to one with a computing device. A computer is supplied for most face to face courses, though participants will need to bring their own (or their school’s) iPad in the case of the new tablets course.

A tutor noted that this practical approach works well: “All the practical, hands-on activities where participants used the software/technologies rather than just watching a tutor demonstration of them worked well. They enjoyed using digital cameras, handheld recording devices and Skype.” On the Scratch course, designed in cooperation between NCTE and Lero last year, one participant said: “Really glad I attended, learned a lot about the enjoyment children can experience in the classroom with the usage of Scratch in the various curricular areas.”

To book, contact your local education centre for face to face courses. Online course bookings are handled on TeacherCPD.ie but unfortunately the online course is already fully booked.

**Links**

www.ncte.ie/training
www.ncte.ie/GoodPractice
www.teachercpd.ie

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