

# Laptops for learning

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While waiting for the results from the laptop and wireless tender processes, I am taking the opportunity to highlight some of the great work that Barbara Bober and the team have been doing on the Professional Learning and Curriculum Support project. As you know the L4L program is firmly focused on transforming learning and teaching. It is critical that teachers feel comfortable in an environment where students are using laptops. I know there are many teachers who are presently using technology in exciting ways to enhance learning and the L4L program is keen to know who you are and what you have been doing. You are the Connected Learning experts who can help others to become comfortable with using technology in the classroom. If you are interested in being involved, send me an email with some details of your experiences to [laptops4learning@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:laptops4learning@det.nsw.edu.au). **Dianne Marshall, A/Program Director**

## TEACHER LAPTOPS

Good News! Funding is now available through T4L for two rollouts of laptops to teachers this year. The first rollout will be in June and another in July. This will mean over 14,000 laptops will be available for teacher use by the end of 2009.

## WIRELESS

Four vendors have been asked to provide a detailed Request for Proposal by 23 March. The vendors are Anabelle Bits Pty Ltd, IBM Australia Pty Ltd, Lenovo (Australia & New Zealand) Pty Ltd and NEC Australia Pty Ltd.

## UPDATE ON PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND CURRICULUM SUPPORT MATERIALS

The first phase of planning for teacher professional learning and curriculum support is now complete. A comprehensive needs analysis overview will inform the next phase of planning which will bring together examples of best practice from schools, regions and the state so that all teachers and learners can be assisted in the process of moving to an effective laptop learning environment.

*"The focus will never be on the technology. Rather, it's the pedagogy that counts. It's worth keeping in mind that laptops are only a tool.*

*They're at our disposal to make learning easier and more enjoyable and meaningful for children." (Holmes, 2008)*

*"Teachers are encouraged to be innovators and partners in the 1:1 program." (Zucker & Hug, 2007)*

Teacher and Principal essential questions guided the initial process of gathering data and assisted in shaping focus areas for professional learning. For teachers and leaders alike the issue of being able to create a quality learning environment with integrated laptop technology was the foremost concern. Other questions related to classroom management, technical and curriculum support and highlighted the importance of giving all teachers opportunities to learn from colleagues and identified 'experts' in school communities.

## Who has been involved in the preliminary consultation phase?

Key groups who have been involved are the Professional Learning and Leadership Directorate (PLLD), Curriculum K-12 Directorate and the Centre for Learning Innovation. The New South Wales Secondary Principal's Council, through its reference groups, also has offered much valuable guidance and support. Discussions with regional ICT School Education Directors, KLA networks, Distance Education leaders and teachers, Macquarie ICT Innovations Centre and informal teacher, executive and principal networks have made valuable contributions to the draft professional learning guidelines and implementation plan.

## What is being prepared initially to support teachers and leaders?

The Professional Learning and Leadership Directorate, Curriculum K-12 Directorate and the Centre for Learning Innovation are collaborating to develop professional learning support and curriculum resources. English, Science, Languages and Technology teachers will be the first to trial this suite of professional learning resources to support learning with laptops in their classrooms.

A forum for teachers will provide opportunities for them to gain advice from experts and to develop skills in practical classroom management in a 1:1 classroom. It will also provide an opportunity to trial software tools and interactive resources which support learning in a laptop environment.

The two main areas for professional learning and leadership development program support will be:

### – Quality Teaching with ICT .

This program which will focus on teaching and learning strategies to promote student achievement and engagement and will include an overview of pedagogical skills and technology tools. This program will be informative, interactive and practical,



providing examples of classroom practices and processes to support teaching and student learning.

### – Leading Learning with ICT

This program will focus on leadership strategies to effectively implement technology and lead the change to support teaching and learning.

Think tanks, workshops and project based learning will be employed in this initial phase. We are working to capture a variety of creative and effective practices already evident in our schools and regions so that 'what works' can be broadcast to a wider audience. Story telling, sharing resources and supporting colleagues through mentoring and coaching practices will support teachers and leaders in their learning.

## What does the research say?

The Curriculum K-12 Directorate has completed a one-to-one computing literature review which identifies that laptops provide the motivation to engage students in their learning and see a connection between what they are learning and the world beyond the classroom.

## What impact do student say laptops have on their learning?

'We all know that ICT engages children and engagement, of course, is the key to successful teaching.' (Holmes, 2008)

Changes in student's attitude and work habits survey data from Maine, 2004

based on 12,000 returned surveys reported that:

*'Laptops help me be better organised'* 78%

*'Laptops improve the quality of my work'* 70%

*'I do more work when I use my laptop'* 70%

*'I am more likely to edit my work with a laptop'* 80%

*'I am more involved in school with a laptop'* 70%

*Laptops make school more interesting'* 70%

Schools report a drop in absenteeism and increased student enthusiasm. Some schools also report a decline in discipline problems.

Teachers report positive impacts of laptops on students with most agreeing that computers increase opportunities to apply knowledge and encourage students to think creatively. Almost all agree that using technology in the classroom helps to prepare their students for life in the 21st century. (Zucher & Hug, 2008)

## What do teachers say?

Teacher's responses in a comparison of teaching with laptops to prior experience without laptops are quoted below (Grimes & Marschauer, 2008)

*'Students spent more time giving presentations'* 74%

*'Students are interested in class'* 84%

'Students help each other more' 84%

'Students take more initiative outside of class time' 65%

'Students' writing quality is better' 57%

'Students' overall quality of work is better' 65%

'Students get more involved in in-depth research' 85%

'Students work harder at their assignments' 79%

'Students revise their work more' 78%

## What can teachers consider now in preparation for a laptop learning environment?

Teachers can prepare for one-to-one computing by:

- ensuring they have the technological skills-hardware and software
- imagining how laptops can transform teaching and learning
- understanding how laptops can enhance existing curriculum
- predicting changing classroom conditions with differentiated learning where students may work more flexibly and may communicate with others outside the classroom
- being practised in strategies for managing a laptop classroom.

Teachers could begin by using the new technology in their personal lives focusing on practical skills, then transferring that learning to the educational context. Leaders can support this process by encouraging teachers to embrace digital technologies in organisation and communication.

As teacher competence and confidence grows so too will their willingness to engage in ever increasing complex tasks relating to lesson preparation and delivery in the laptop classroom.

School leaders have a significant role to play in collaborating with the school community to articulate the purpose and benefits for student learning in a laptop classroom and by supporting teachers through well timed, structured, quality professional learning opportunities.

## Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

### **What is the expectation of Year 9 students who have been allocated a laptop?**

Students will be expected to bring their laptops to school with a fully charged battery. This is the same as students coming to school prepared for class with their books, paper and pens.

### **Who will be responsible for the safety and security of the laptop?**

Students will be responsible for the safety and security of their laptop at all times.

### **Who will be responsible for dealing with a problem on the laptop?**

There will be a technical support officer who will be responsible for dealing with all technical issues.

### **What if the laptop does not work or has to be repaired?**

If the laptop does not work it will be replaced. If it has to undergo repair/maintenance, a loan laptop will be issued to the student.

## 2009 Timelines (as at 10 March 2009)

### **April**

Rollout of wireless commences.

### **May**

Teacher professional learning commences.

### **May**

Laptops trialled.

### **June**

Stage 1 rollout teacher laptops.

### **Late July**

Round One and Year 9 laptop rollout commences.

Stage 2 rollout teacher laptops.

### **How will students be able to identify their laptop?**

It is intended that laptops will have a 'skin' which can be personalised.

### **Will there be appropriate use of the laptop in the classroom?**

Professional learning is being provided for teachers in classroom management and use of laptops. The Laptop User Agreement will also be explained to students with expectations and guidelines clearly explained.

### **Who owns the laptop?**

Laptops will be assigned to students but remain the property of the NSW DET until ownership is transferred at the end of Year 12.

## For further information contact

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<https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/deptresources/majorprojects/laptops4learn/index.htm>  
Internet website coming soon.

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