

ICT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR TEACHERS THROUGH SOUTHERN CROSS UNIVERSITY'S MASTER OF EDUCATION (COURSEWORK)

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This poster session will showcase the opportunities available for teacher professional development at Southern Cross University. A particular focus will be placed on the information technology stream of units which can be undertaken individually or as part of a Graduate Certificate (4 units) or a Master of Education (Coursework) (8 units). The display will encompass print based and digital resources, including hands-on access to two of the Web-based educational information technology units; *Educational Information Technology for the School Practitioner* and *Management of Information Technology in the School Environment*. Conference delegates will have an opportunity to discuss the many ways that the Master of Education program can be tailored to enable them to pursue a particular focus on technology in learning and teaching. Many teachers may also be interested in the opportunities for recognition of prior learning and advanced standing for professional development programs such as the NSW Department of Education's Technology in Learning and Teaching (TiLT) program.

ACKNOWLEDGING THE ISSUES

Teachers at both primary and secondary level are faced with growing demands to incorporate computer technology into their teaching programs. Teachers must not only develop the skills to utilise technology but the ability to integrate these skills into their lesson planning. Assisting teachers to become competent and confident in integrating technology is seen as 'one of the most significant challenges now confronting teacher education, teachers and schools' (Ramsey, 2000, p.68). For many teachers the gap between perceived technological competence and learning to use computers in their teaching is often threatening and overwhelming (Ropp, 1998). Many have high computer anxiety and low computer self-efficacy, which is further exacerbated by the often excellent computer skills of some of their students. Furthermore, given the isolated and independent nature of their work, if teachers encounter difficulties there is often very little assistance or support available to them (Becker, 1994).



We acknowledge that no matter how much technology a school has it is the teacher that matters most to the student's learning.

DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT?

At Southern Cross University we believe that effective professional development for ICT requires more than skills. Training in the use of a particular piece of software is likely to be inadequate or out-of-date in a short period of time; months not years. Our approach to ICT professional development focuses on teachers becoming life-long computer users... developing the attitudes, values and beliefs that foster confidence and a commitment to ongoing learning. We focus on assisting teachers to adapt to change; to be flexible, intuitive and imaginative in their use of technology.

Our approach to ICT professional development focuses on teachers becoming life-long computer users...

Why Consider Our ICT Professional Development?

There are a wide variety of ICT training and professional development options available to teachers, ranging from one-day training, TaFE courses, side-by-side mentoring initiatives and commercially packaged training initiatives. We recognise the value of these approaches and embrace them within our course structure. However, our approach to ICT professional development differs from many of these in the following ways.

- ◆ **We focus on the specific needs of teachers:** Too often ICT courses or training programs are not tailored to meet the every-day needs of classroom teachers and school practitioners. Our units are specially targeted to be customised to enable you to focus on your own KLA area.
- ◆ **We target the needs of the 'average' teacher:** Our ICT units are not designed specifically for specialist computer teachers or educators with high levels of computer competence. They are specially designed to meet the learning needs of any teaching professional, not matter what their current level of confidence, skill or understanding.
- ◆ **We focus on increased confidence and motivation to integrate ICT in your teaching:** We recognise that confidence is the key to successful computer use. Our focus is *not* just on skills.
- ◆ **We acknowledge that teachers are busy professionals with many commitments:** Our programs are flexible and you can study at your own pace and at your own time.
- ◆ **We involve participants in practical and relevant learning activities:** Through our Units you will be able to apply your learning directly in your day-to-day teaching activities. All learning activities are tailored to meet your skill and confidence level and the demands of your classroom practice.
- ◆ **We provide recognition and accreditation for your ICT learning:** Many teachers participate in short courses, one-day-training opportunities, self-directed peer supported learning. They often express that at the end of the day they don't attain any credential or qualification for their efforts. That is what we can provide.

Our ICT units aim to provide students with first-hand experience learning *with* technology as they learn *about* technology.

WHAT DO WE OFFER IN ICT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT?

It is possible to undertake individual units of study in ICT as 'one off' units. Alternatively you may choose to continue on and complete four units to exit with a Graduate Certificate in Professional Development or complete eight units to attain a Master of Education.

There are three units offered at postgraduate level which focus specifically on technology in schools:

- ◆ Educational Information Technology for the School Practitioner;
- ◆ Integrating Information Technology into the Classroom; and
- ◆ Management of Information Technology in the School Environment.

**Flexibility to
complete 'one off'
units or to continue
on and complete a
Master of Education**

◆ Educational Information Technology for the School Practitioner

This unit aims to develop a critical awareness, skills and confidence in the use of information technology for teaching and learning in the school environment.

Educational practitioners considering undertaking this unit *do not need any basic level of computer skills*. The unit provides an opportunity for individuals to progress their skills within a context of reflective application in their workplace. Assessment is practical and relevant to the classroom environment. The Unit wraps around four modules; Thinking, Using, Applying and Creating.

- The **Thinking module** looks at the factors which influence individuals computer learning. Participants are asked to think about themselves as learners, as well as their own students. The focus is on establishing appropriate learning strategies and values and attitudes towards computers in education.
- The **Using module** is practically based and assists you to develop your skills and achieve your goals in the use of various information technologies, including word processors, spreadsheets, databases, graphics and various Internet technologies. Throughout, there are lots of ideas on how these technologies can be applied in the classroom to support learning and teaching.



"The hands-on approach to this unit has greatly improved my level of computer competence and capability. The approach to learning has helped me achieve the goals that I had identified at the beginning of the unit"

- The **Applying module** focuses on the application of information technologies in the classroom and school environment, examining aspects such as classroom management, ethical and legal issues and the impact of technology on the curriculum and assessment. Lots of opportunity is provided to interact with Web-based resources and educational software.
- The **Creating module** provides you with the skills and knowledge to design and develop a technology-based teaching and learning resource of your own.

Educational Information Technology for the School Practitioner is supported by both print based and online self-paced resources. There is also continued support from your tutor and online interaction with fellow participants.

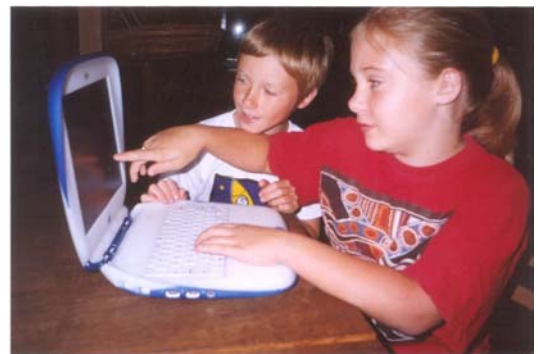
Teaching professionals enrolling in this unit are required to have access to a computer with Internet connectivity.

"I have found this unit to be a very valuable addition to my practice as a teacher... the unit has incorporated very useful resources for teachers attempting to incorporate the computer and Internet into the classroom successfully. My knowledge of what is 'out there' for classroom use has increased exponentially"

◆ **Integrating Information Technology into Classroom Practice**

This *new* unit examines the integration of information technology in the school environment. A strong focus is placed on the pedagogical impact of technology, particularly constructivist, authentic and problem-based learning approaches and the role of technology in areas such as special education, information literacy and lifelong learning. Issues associated with classroom management and the changing role of the teacher are addressed.

Participants have the opportunity of engaging with, and critiquing, a wide range of exciting and innovative technology-based resources. There are two pathways to complete the Unit – a practical focus which involves Unit participants in classroom-based activities and application of their learning; and an alternative pathway for those not in a position to immediately apply their learning in the classroom.



Participants continue to develop their information technology skills and knowledge through participation, and experimentation with various technologies utilised in course delivery, while also applying and experimenting with these technologies and techniques in their classrooms.

Teaching professionals enrolling in this unit are required to have access to a computer with Internet connectivity. A basic level of computer skills is assumed.

◆ **Management of Information Technology in the School Environment**

This unit will be of particular relevance to educational practitioners who are involved in decision making, staff development, planning and policy formation within school environments. However all educational practitioners will find the unit valuable, providing a deeper understanding of the place of information technology in the school curriculum and school environment and the wide range of management issues which ensue.

The Unit wraps around eight management themes and the metaphor of a jigsaw. A constructivist approach provides participants with an opportunity to experience first hand the potential influence of technology on pedagogy. Participants are fully focussed on issues that impact on their own school, and through the Unit they develop an information technology plan for their school.



This unit is also discussed in a refereed paper presented at this conference (Phelps and Ellis, 2002).

Educational professionals enrolling in this unit are required to have access to a computer with Internet access.

DEVELOPING YOUR INTEREST IN EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY EVEN FURTHER !

If individuals choose to pursue their interest in ICT through to a Master award our program provides a stream of units targeted specifically toward classroom-based professionals at both primary and secondary level. This allows participants to extend their experience with information technology by further developing their skills and knowledge within the context of their classroom-based practice. An example of such a program structure might therefore be:

| | |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Core Unit: | <i>Understanding Educational Research</i> |
| Educational IT Sequence: | <i>Educational Information Technology for the School Practitioner</i> |
| | <i>Integrating Information Technology into the Classroom</i> |
| | <i>Management of Information Technology in the School Environment</i> |
| Application of IT to Workplace: | <i>Professional Practice in Education I</i> |
| | <i>Professional Practice in Education II</i> |
| Other units: | Any other 2 units from the schedule |

WHAT MAKES SOUTHERN CROSS UNIVERSITY'S PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS STAND APART?

Many features of our professional development and postgraduate programs are distinctive. We believe that our Master of Education program meets the professional development needs of teaching professionals in the following ways:

- ◆ **It has been developed in response to the needs of the Profession** – We have consulted extensively with practising teachers, principals, education authorities and professional bodies to identify current professional development needs and interests.
- ◆ **It provides for flexible entry** - You can enrol at any time throughout the year and progress and complete at your own pace (within specified maximum periods).
- ◆ **It recognises and provides credit for professional development experiences** - Our program provides you with maximum opportunities¹ to have your previous or current professional development activities recognised without unnecessarily complicated paperwork and processes. Many recognised professional development programs offered by professional bodies and employers have been recognised for automatic advanced standing.
- ◆ **It incorporates significant flexibility and student choice** - The MEd course structure is designed specifically to provide a range of options to suit the candidate's professional interests and needs.
- ◆ **It is structured to provide critical relevance to your work as educators** - Most units in our course provide maximum opportunity for you to apply the learning to your own workplace context.
- ◆ **It focuses on current needs in education** - The MEd facilitates and supports investigation of current issues you face in your professional practice.
- ◆ **It can be studied at your own pace and in your own environment** - All units are offered externally using a combination of print-based and online resources. There are no compulsory residential requirements, although optional and supplementary seminars and workshops are at times provided.
- ◆ **It utilises innovative and relevant assessment practices** - The MEd units include assessment that is closely linked to your individual professional practice. All assessment is progressive, with no formal examinations.
- ◆ **It provides an optional exit point** - If you do not wish to complete all 8 units in the MEd you have the option to exit with a Graduate Certificate in Professional Development on successful completion of 4 units.
- ◆ **It provides a pathway for students considering Doctoral studies** - If you are interested in research in the future you can complete units which will qualify you for entry to a Doctoral program.
- ◆ **It is supported by quality learning materials** - The MEd units are up-to-date and structured for flexible delivery utilising Internet-based learning support. Staff in the School of Education will work closely with you to support your learning.

Our program allows you flexibility to pursue your own personal and professional interests at your own pace and in your own location, integrating your study directly with your day-to-day professional practice.

¹ A candidate may be granted up to 50% advanced standing for the award.

THE COURSE STRUCTURE

To complete the Master of Education (Coursework) program you would normally complete 8 units from the list of units below. Only one unit is compulsory. *Understanding Educational Research* has been included as a core unit as it assists education professionals to critically appraise the research literature which informs their profession. This is considered essential at Masters level and has been recognised by professional and employment bodies as a highly desirable skill.

Compulsory Unit

Understanding Educational Research

Elective Units

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Mentoring for Early Career Professionals | Middle Schooling |
| Vocational Education and Training Studies | Language, Literacy and Diversity |
| Developing the School as a Learning Community | Behaviour Management |
| Educational Information Technology for the School Practitioner | Educational Leadership |
| Integrating Information Technology into the Classroom | Assessing Early Numeracy |
| Management of Information Technology in the School Environment | Teaching Early Numeracy |
| Professional Practice in Education I | Mathematics Recovery Theory and Techniques IA➤ |
| Professional Practice in Education II | Mathematics Recovery Theory and Techniques IB➤ |
| Enquiry I: Qualitative Research in Education | School Welfare: Loss and Grief Education ➤ |
| Enquiry II: Quantitative Research in Education | Independent Study Unit I: Negotiated Reading Course |
| The Nature and Process of Educational Change | Research Project - Background and Proposal |
| Inclusive Education | Research Project (1 or 2 units) |

➤ Available only to teachers working where these programs are being implemented.

ELIGIBILITY FOR ENTRY

Any practicing teacher may do individual units with us as professional development units. However, to gain entry to the MEd program you would normally need to:

- hold the equivalent of an undergraduate qualification in teaching or equivalent program; and
- provide evidence of at least one year's experience in a field of employment relevant to the course.

You may apply for entry to the MEd Program at any time throughout the year.

COST

The Master of Education (Coursework) is a full fee paying course. However because you are able to claim your expenses as work related (and hence as tax deductions) most students will find that the cost of \$750 per unit is commensurate with HECS (Higher Education Contribution Scheme) funded study.

APPLICATIONS

If you would like to discuss any aspects of the course, please don't hesitate to phone or e-mail us. Our staff will discuss with you how the MEd can be best tailored to your needs and how your previous or current professional development experience can gain you credit in the program.

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