"Footprints"

The Global Classroom 1995

....that attention should be directed to the human dimension, which promises to provide the key to more successful implementation of information technology in schools. It believes the issue should be addressed through structured professional development programmes based on information technology and an understanding of such matters as learning, change and the factors that affect school culture [1] .

Executive Summary:

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[1] Victorian Government Working Party _Technologies for Enhanced Learning_ Page 4 Sept 94

BACKGROUND TO PROJECT:

• In November of 1994, the Directorate of School Education in Victoria agreed to support the The Whalesong Foundation's design of a plan to co-ordinate and implement a State-wide telecommunications project for all Victorian schools based on the I*EARN Model.

• The results and findings of this evaluation are based on the data collected through *Teacher Interviews, Online participation and observation records,* and Formal *Student and Staff surveys.*

• This evaluation and report is intended to provide the Directorate of School Education in Victoria, with the data and observations necessary to assess the validity of a "collaborative, theme-based project" approach to the integration and use of telecommunications and related technologies in Victorian schools. This evaluation is also designed to provide the data required to make the necessary decisions to continue the possible future development of the "Global Classroom" concept and related activities.

• The project was a **DIRECT and TANGIBLE** response, and in many ways anticipated, the findings of the Victorian Government working party on The Use of Technology as an Education and Communications Facility in Schools

• An overwhelming **76%** of schools responded to the survey

PARTICIPANTS:

• It is significant to note that in 30.5% of participating schools 91-100% of their female teachers worked in projects. This reverses the current notion of the internet being "male domain". In over **50%** of schools, **60%** or more of the teachers involved were female.

• **100** Schools in total. **49** Primary School **51** Secondary Schools
• **251** teachers *DIRECTLY* involved **3007** Students *DIRECTLY involved.
•**47.8%** of all students were between the ages of 11-15.

•**28.2%** were 16-18 years old.

•**27.7%** were between the ages of 6 and ten years.

• Victorian schools communicated with 26 countries during the project

POSITIVE EFFECTS ON PARTICIPANTS

General teacher attitudes:

- **87%** of the teachers indicated that their willingness to continue to investigate and use the technology and related curriculum model has in fact **IMPROVED** because of their involvement in the project.

- When added to those teachers that indicated that their motivation and/or willingness to continue in such a project had at least stayed the same, the figure becomes an overwhelming **100% .**

- **89%** of respondents indicated that their level of morale had either remained the same or improved because of participation in the global classroom project.

- **87.7%** of teachers across the state indicated that the Global Classroom Project had helped to maintain or improve their job satisfaction.

Professional Development

- **85.9%** of teachers indicated that their own professional development has been IMPROVED by their participation in the project. **No** teachers indicated that the professional development had been negatively affected by the project.

- **85.9%** of teachers indicated that their teaching strategies had been broadened both in quantity and quality (see general teacher comments). In essence, involvement in the Global Classroom project has allowed teachers to trial and modify new strategies, WITH the technology, in real classroom situations. This above all else (in the opinion of the evaluators) is a signal that the Global Classroom project has had a positive improvement on the shape of Victorian classrooms.

- **78.9%** of teachers indicated that their technical understanding of telecommunications had been IMPROVED by participation in the project.No teachers indicated that their understanding had been reduced.
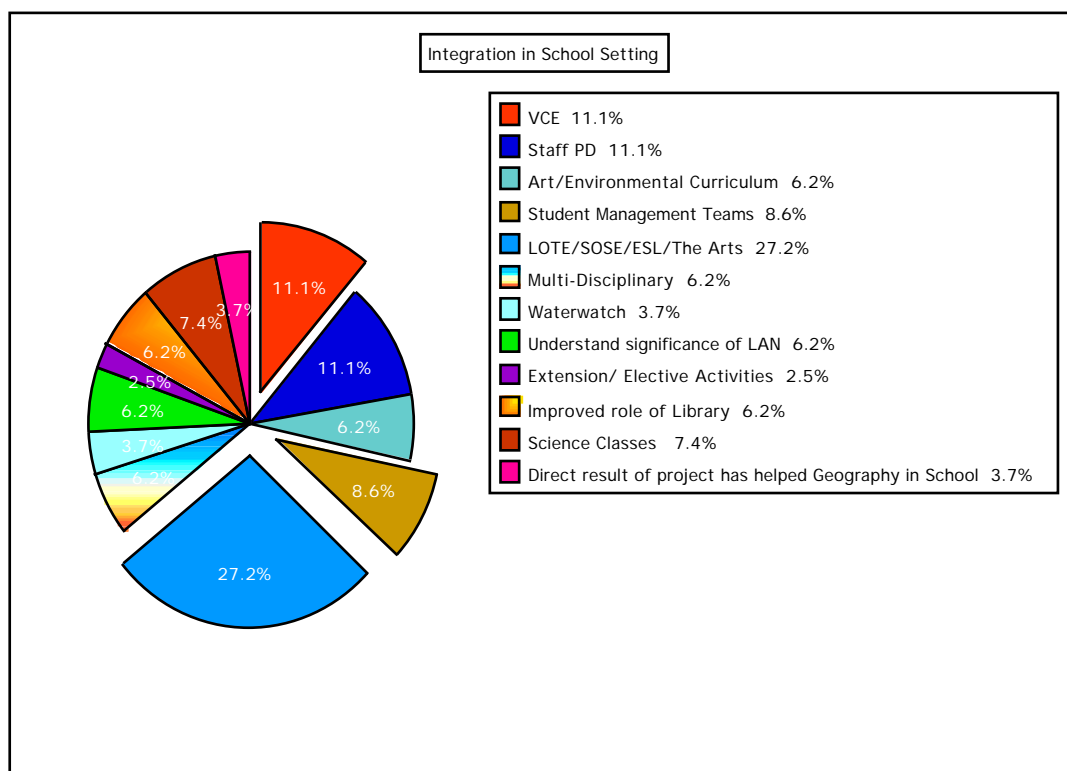
- **72.9%** responded that they would DEFINITELY involve their schools communities again, a further 18.6% indicating they 'probably' would. This makes some **91.5%** of teachers replying affirmatively to the question.

Cont....

• **69.8%** of students have had what the evaluators believe to be "meaningful, regular exposure" to the technology over the course of the project.

• **32.6%** , almost a full one third of ALL students involved in the project, had use of the technology <u>in</u> <u>their normal classes,</u> a further 16.3% had use of the technology 'at least 3 times a week'. Together we have 48.9% of students utilizing the technology as part of their normal working week. The significance of this change when considered with previous usage patterns can not be underestimated.

• It is very interesting to note that there has been quite a diverse application of the technology right across the learning areas :

Integration in School Setting

- ■ VCE 11.1%
- ■ Staff PD 11.1%
- ■ Art/Environmental Curriculum 6.2%
- ■ Student Management Teams 8.6%
- ■ LOTE/SOSE/ESL/The Arts 27.2%
- ■ Multi-Disciplinary 6.2%
- ■ Waterwatch 3.7%
- ■ Understand significance of LAN 6.2%
- ■ Extension/ Elective Activities 2.5%
- ■ Improved role of Library 6.2%
- ■ Science Classes 7.4%
- ■ Direct result of project has helped Geography in School 3.7%

• **27.2%** of schools that applied the technology and project activities to the LOTE/SOSE/ESL/Arts areas.
• **11.1%** of schools utilised the project within the VCE
• **8.6%** of schools that established Student Management Teams as part of the "structural adjustments" when implementing the Global Classroom projects.

LIMITING FACTORS EXPERIENCED BY PARTICIPANTS

¶ **86.6%** of teachers have indicated that teacher workload is the SINGLE MOST restrictive factor in the further development of network learning environments in schools.

¶ **57.6%** of teachers indicating that they did not have the <u>continuing</u> access to training they required.

> **This has been alleviated in 1996 by the expansion of the project to include STATEWIDE SCHOOL BASED internet trainers and "online" classroom mentors.**

¶ **44.2%** of teachers also indicated that COST was a limiting factor. This relates directly to the availability of internet access per region, and as this report is being written, we are documenting a further increase in access to sites that previously had none, and a reduction in cost, in some cases of 50% or more from previous months.

¶ **55%** of teachers indicated they did not feel they utilized the support structure as effectively as they could have. Again, time played a big factor in this area, with some responsibility being taken by the I*EARN Support Office for not anticipating the extent of support required for some teachers, thus greatly retarding the "response time" provided.

¶ **55.7%** of teachers reported that access to computers within their own school was a problem: coupled with some **46.1%** of teachers who indicated that timetables worked against sharing the technology. These are readily identifiable and potentially "curable" concerns.

¶ **67.3 %** of teachers indicated that it was in fact difficulties with the technology that prevented consistent and coherent development of the programmes in schools. On further investigation and personal interview of respondents, it was found that many technical systems in schools were <u>not provided with the relevant support mechanisms to allow teachers to develop their expertise in confidence.</u> In many cases being left alone with the vagaries of a network system that they did not understand, with little structural support in place to correct the problem.

REPORT CONCLUSIONS:

If nothing else, we believe the Global Classroom project has placed the Victorian education community in a strong position to meet this challenge.

As stated earlier in the report:

"Perhaps the "acid test" question for teachers was simply;
Would you involve your school community in a similar project in 1996?
A significant 72.9% responded with 'definitely' and a further 18.6% indicating they
'probably' would. This makes some 91.5% of teachers replying affirmatively to the
question.

This is, in many ways, the "bottom line". Teachers have indicated that the model, after nearly 12 months of examination and experience, is ,in their minds, relevant and beneficial to the goals of a school and the education community. The DSE/I*EARN Global Classroom project set out to put the needs of students and teachers and the wider Victorian educational community <u>FIRST</u>. It appears that by most indicators, the needs of the participants in relation to the integration and utilization of telecommunication technologies in to classrooms, has been successfully met.

1996 and the second phase of the Global Classroom Project, will draw heavily from these findings to further enhance the learning opportunities for all students and teachers as we prepare to live and work in the 21st Century, a period in human history, which will no doubt be marked by exponential rates of change.

The evaluators are confident that the "curriculum imperative" approach to the issue of the integration of telecommunications and associated technologies in schools has demonstrated considerable success in its first of a two year project period. We look forward with confidence to 1996.

Bill Coppinger   Andrew Hocking