

# ITTE Position Paper on ICT and Learning – July 2005

## ICT and Learning – an ITTE Position Paper

We in ITTE believe that teacher educators have a significant role and responsibility to assist teachers, whether in initial training or through continuing professional development, to become both knowledgeable and reflectively critical in their deployment of ICT tools to support learning.

### *ICT as a tool kit for learning*

We recognise the many special opportunities associated with ICT, and the particular capacity of ICT to support learning. ICT provides a uniquely powerful set of tools for learning. However, as with any tools, this inherent capacity and power may be released for use, or it may be diminished or even remain locked away. Potentially powerful tools such as new electronic technologies require users, including teachers and learners, who can release the potential for empowered learning. This requires contexts and settings that are conducive to the release of that potential, and to the empowered learning that is the result.

### *Learners and ICT tools*

Learners (including teachers) should have access to a wide range of ICT tools to support learning. These tools can, in turn, give learners access to greatly enhanced opportunities for learning. Learners should be supported in becoming knowledgeable, critical, exploratory and creative users of the technology.

We believe that ICT tools should:

- give learners access to information and sources they never had before
- enable learners to express their creativity in innovative ways
- enable learners to make connections with other people and to form new relationships
- empower learners to take greater control and responsibility for organising their own learning

### *Teachers and ICT tools*

Teachers plan lessons in order to meet learning goals. In planning lessons which make use of new electronic technologies, teachers need to have a clear understanding of how the specific characteristics of the particular technology in the planned context may enable, or assist towards, the achievement of the learning goals. This requires close attention to the context and the goals, together with knowledge of the available and appropriate technological tools. A key question, then, is not 'What technology are you using?', but rather 'What are you using it for?'

### *Learning and ICT - the ITTE view*

We recognise there has been a great deal of Government expenditure on ICT. This is welcome and must continue. Understandably Government wishes to know if this expenditure has been worthwhile, and seeks an answer in, for instance, improvements to standardised test scores. We recognise that this is an important aspect of the overall drive for improvement in the measurable outcomes of education. But it is only part of the picture of the relationship between ICT and learning, and should not be pursued to the exclusion of other potential learning benefits.

In ITTE we believe that the true potential of ICT for learning lies in skills and dispositions that are more difficult to measure but are, in the longer term, more valuable. These include:

- the ability to be a critical creator and user of information;
- communication and collaboration, both locally and across electronic networks;
- problem solving abilities, including the use of heuristics and investigative strategies;
- autonomous working practices, combined with the capacity for working with others;
- creativity and the ability to work in unfamiliar and novel situations.

These are the true learning outcomes necessary for life and citizenship in the interconnected world of the Information Age. It is the responsibility of teacher education in its various forms to work towards their realisation.