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## TIPS FOR MONITORING OUR STUDENTS IN THE COMPUTER ROOM

- Have students turn *off* their monitors when you're giving directions.
- Appoint classroom technology managers.
  - Attendance Manager**, who takes attendance and serves as a substitute teacher when necessary.
  - Materials Manager**, who passes out materials.
  - Technical Manager**, who helps resolve printer and computer issues
  - End-of-Class Manager**, who makes sure work areas are neat -- keyboards pushed in, mice straight, and programs closed -- before students are dismissed.
- Simply end your lesson five minutes early
- When working on lengthy technology projects, print out step-by-step instructions.
- Keep a red card at each computer. When students need help, have them place it visible.
- Before students leave class, have them turn their mice upside down so the trackballs are showing. You'll lose fewer trackballs that way.
- Attach laminated cards to all portable technology equipment. Include a list of any accessories -- batteries, cords, headphones, and so on -- contained in the case. Number each case, and keep a list of the numbers and assignments for easy tracking.
- Create a folder in the Start menu and place any programs you use with students in that folder. Students never have to click Programs -- everything they use is in one folder.
- When working in a computer lab, assign each student a computer; if students are to work in pairs, consider pairing students by level. Give students a copy of the seating chart. Students can line up in "computer lab order" at the door and seating goes very quickly when they get to the lab.
- Keep keyboards clean -- and hopefully cut down on germs -- by always having students wash their hands before going to the computer lab or using classroom computers.
- Always have students check that all applications are closed (to avoid costly crashes) and that the sound is turned down *before* starting a lesson
- When students are working on small group technology projects on classroom computers, divide the tasks so some students are working on the computers while others are working at their desks on another part of the project. Provide a sign-up sheet for the computers. When one group is finished using the computers, they must notify the next group that it's their turn.
- If you're working on a network, ask your technology coordinator to set up a shared folder for Internet resources. Then, when you're planning an Internet lesson, simply save a shortcut to the Web site in that folder. During lab time, students can go to the shared folder, double click the link, and go right to the site without typing the URL. This saves time and stress for both students and teachers.
- Never assume you know it all! Offer a free pencil to any student who teaches you something you didn't know.

## **11 LESSONS LEARNT WHILE WORKING WITH STUDENTS IN THE COMPUTER ROOM**

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### **Before the lesson**

1. Be clear about the value that you hope will be added to your lesson by using ICT.
2. There will be a departmental or school "code of practice" for behaviour in an ICT room (based on school rules, health and safety etc). It is important that both you and the students are absolutely clear about what is expected. Keeping to the rules that they are used to in ICT is one way of establishing that they would be unwise to try anything on!
3. Know how you can get technical help in the event of technical problems. If you can, arrange to check with a technician that the room is ready before starting the lesson. Build your own familiarity with the software that you will be asking the students to use.

### **Beginning of lesson**

4. The lesson begins outside the door where the students should be lined up – remind them of the need to stow coats and bags safely. Under the desks/worktops is usually the safest place for bags – there can be a lot of movement around an ICT room, which may be cramped in the first place. Check for trailing leads, especially if you are working with laptops. *Obstructions are a serious trip hazard, primarily for you as you walk around; monitoring what is going on and answering questions.*
5. You cannot compete with a computer! Don't even attempt to try. While you introduce your lesson you need to have
  - all monitors switched off and children turned to face you
  - all students' chairs physically moved so that they are facing you
  - all students' hands off keyboards (even when computers are switched off, they love to play with keyboards!) and mice.

### **Middle of lesson**

6. All students should know their password – if one or more do not, it can bog the lesson down. Be aware of the ICT department's normal response to forgotten passwords and know who you can call on to sort children out if this occurs.
7. Use the status bar at the bottom of the screen, which will tell you everything the student has open. Students are very adept at opening several programs at once and switching between them when you walk round. If they know you check the bar they are less likely to go off task. In particular, keep a sharp eye open for the "E" of Internet Explorer when they are not supposed to be using the Internet.

### **End of lesson**

8. Encourage students to use Print Preview before printing to check that everything is all right. In particular, they should be looking for blank pages and obvious formatting errors. If the network takes a little while to respond, they should NOT keep clicking on the print button.
9. Students will work at quite different speeds. Some students will not complete all the tasks you set – you need to have a clear idea of what is the minimum acceptable amount from these students and insist that it is done. Reinforce your expectations and give time checks as appropriate. For quicker students, having nothing to do and the resulting boredom may cause these them to become disruptive or to try to do inappropriate things. Have one or more extension or enrichment activities in mind – not just more of the same.

10. Establish the expectation that the computer room is a place where work is done. Resist requests to end a lesson by "going on the Internet", playing games, etc. Students will ask to do this – consider what your response would be if a child who finished early in a normal lesson asked to be allowed to play on their Nintendo, read a comic or generally indulge in a recreational pastime!
11. Insist that students leave the computer room in a fit state for the next class. Check its state before dismissing them and ensure that all chairs are tucked safely under benches/tables. If there is a history of problems, dismiss students singly at the end of each lesson and check their machine as they leave. This will eliminate almost all abuse.

Perhaps the best tip of all – enjoy teaching with ICT! It can add a whole new dimension to the teaching of certain aspects of your subject, appeal to different learning styles and provide opportunities to enhance and enrich learning.

### **11 Lessons Learnt Summary**

1. Be clear about how ICT will add value to your lesson.
2. Know the rules for using the ICT room.
3. Know how you can get technical help in the event of technical problems.
4. Line the students up outside the room. Ensure bags and coats are stowed safely. Check for dangerously trailing leads and wires especially if working with laptops.
5. When introducing the lesson, get the children to turn their monitors off, turn around in their seats and keep their hands away from the keyboards and mice.
6. Know what you will do if a child claims to have forgotten their password.
7. Use the status bar to monitor what programs each student is running.
8. Encourage students to use Print Preview BEFORE printing, check for blank pages.
9. Some students will finish early, others will struggle to keep up. Be clear about your minimum expectations and have extension tasks ready.
10. Establish the expectation that the computer room is a place where work is done. Resist requests to end a lesson by "going on the Internet", playing games, etc
11. Check the state of the room before dismissing pupils.

TOP TIP: Enjoy yourself!