

the partnership

A publication for Companies and Services participating in the Luxembourg International Business Community

Integrated Technology at ISL

a global
future
through an
international
education

Does technology make a difference in the quality of a student's education? This question is directed at schools worldwide as money is poured into new hardware, software licenses, specialised staff, and teacher training. How does one know that learning is improved? It is especially difficult for educators to measure improvement quantitatively, for example, in the form of higher examination results. On the other hand, it is appropriate to consider how technology affects a student's disposition toward learning and his or her acquisition of vital skills for the future. At the International School of Luxembourg, technology has become an integral part of a student's daily routine and equally an integral part of a teacher's strategies and unit plans. It has become a very powerful tool that enables students to "develop responsibility for their own learning" as described in the school's mission statement.

At ISL, technology is not taught as a separate subject, but is understood more as a vehicle taking students where they need to go to meet the challenges of their university studies and workplace. There were three critical steps in ISL's relatively recent surge in the use of technology. First, ISL representatives worked with the architect of our new facilities on the Geesseknäpchen to plan an extensive fibre-optic network. Secondly, the Board of Governors agreed to subsidise the teachers' private purchase of laptop computers. This decision helped the staff to develop their technology skills more quickly and to discover how using a computer could best be applied to what they taught.

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The third watershed came in 2000 when ISL moved to its new facilities. Ernst & Young took an interest in the school's philosophy about learning and agreed to support ISL's acquisition of new computers, scanners and printers, a partnership they have continued to this day (see Profile, Page 4). The technology staff deployed the new hardware and software immediately, particularly First Class, an intra/ internet communications programme for staff and students that allows easy access to files from work stations around the school and from home. To date, the

school has fifty-three networked classrooms, many fitted with LCD overhead projectors and five computer laboratories fully equipped with scanners, projectors, digital cameras, drawing pads, headphones, microphones and a vast selection of software.

It takes more than just the provision of hardware and software, however, to create a new ethos within a school. The ISL technology committee developed a five-year technology plan that placed emphasis upon supporting those teachers who wished to implement technology supported learning, while nurturing new interests among those who were less inclined. Technical competence became a target area for professional development. Popular hands-on workshops have included orientation to new software, instruction on how to use the on-line library catalogue, and creating a web page. In time, technology use became common to all teachers.



In the lower school, teachers meet with the IT coordinator and the librarian to make sure that technology is used to meaningfully enhance instruction and the curriculum. A recent example was the Grade 5 Exploration and Discovery Museum. The entire unit was posted as a 'project pathfinder' on the library website. Every resource, evaluation tool, task and project recommendation was posted within the pathfinder. Students and teachers used this site as a portal for their research, as a starting point for their assignment, as a place where students could

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regularly check their progress against a posted rubric and eventually as a place where some of the completed projects would be stored as examples. Tanya Irene, lower school computer coordinator explains, "Because technology is a tool, it is absolutely appropriate to teach both technology and library skills in the context of the curriculum. This ensures meaningful use of all of the exceptional resources we have available at this school." Mrs. Irene notes that while it is understood that technology is not always appropriate, teachers know that technological options are available for consideration. "We must ensure that the curriculum programme drives the use of technology and not the other way around."

In the upper school, technology is integrated into the curriculum in all subjects and at all levels. Departments and classes work together with the upper school IT coordinator, Seth Ruef, to establish course folders on the File Server as well as to consider new techniques and appropriate uses of technology. For example, 7th grade social studies teacher Carlos Agraz used video to capture his class debating the role of Roman emperors. Mr. Ruef placed the performances on the school's media server, thus allowing students to critique their work themselves and to present it to their parents at an evening event. "Some of the most successful projects develop spontaneously," explains Mr. Ruef. "Last term, my communications class was studying the power of language and messages. At the same time, I noticed the business studies class using the computer lab to write their presentations for a marketing study on some fictitious products they had developed. I approached the teacher, Geoff Jenkins, and asked if we could work together, with my students writing a storyboard for his products. We then approached the drama teacher, Mike West, and asked if his students would act in our advertisements. This has been an exciting and fulfilling project because the students have responsibility for

the whole thing, and we teachers have been facilitators. Students presented their finished work at an upper school assembly at the end of January."

The all-school technology committee meets monthly to continuously monitor progress with respect to the technology plan. The committee includes teachers, IT staff members, and the school director, Clayton Lewis. All proposals for new hardware and software are submitted to this committee for review. The committee prepares and submits a technology budget each year whereby approximately 20% of the total computers are replaced by new ones, ensuring that no machines are more than five years old.

Other initiatives at the school have improved school wide communication, such as the community website and eNews, a weekly electronic newsletter that is sent to parents to keep them informed of school activities and directions. As Mr. Lewis explains, "We are confident that the integration of technology with our curriculum and throughout our community is essential. Teachers harness the energy of our tech-savvy students and develop impressive new approaches. Attitudes about teaching and learning evolve continuously. Communication is much easier. We are indebted to Ernst & Young for their support and appreciate their understanding of what it takes for young people to become life-long learners in our technology driven world."



ISL Networks

ISL's CAS coordinator, Diane Russell, met with members of The Network (International business and professional women's network) to receive a check for €6000 that the group had raised in support of the ISL dormitory appeal in Tanzania.

The students needed to raise enough money to purchase building materials to construct a girls dormitory at the Komakya Secondary School, Tanzania. The money donated by The Network was raised through private and corporate sponsorship by members who took part in Luxembourg's "City Jogging".

Ruth Springham, spokeswoman for The Network, explained, "We were delighted with the response we had to the charity event, the amount individuals raised was fantastic. The corporate sponsors that I would like to thank are Cargolux, Fast, Kuehne + Nagel, The Lions Club Erasmus, Delphi,

Office City, Dutch Finishing Touch, Price Waterhouse Cooper and e2advance. We chose the Tanzania project because we believe strongly in education as a means to improving prospects in life. Girls in Tanzania who make it to secondary education are privileged. To have this advantage taken from them through the risk of rape or abuse is intolerable".



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Lance Henson

Cheyenne Poet and Human rights activist

Lance Henson, Cheyenne poet and member of the Working Group for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples at the United Nations in Geneva, visited the International School of Luxembourg recently to speak with students from Grades 6 through 12 about his life and work. This visit to the school was made possible through the financial support of the Human Rights Fund of State Street Bank.

Mr Henson not only read and talked about his poetry as a voice of his people, but also as a voice of all oppressed peoples in the world. He explained the stories behind many of his poems and what had motivated him to write them. ISL students were joined in the afternoon by neighbouring students from Lycée Aline Mayrisch, who had also been studying Mr Henson's work and Native American culture in their English class.

"Some exciting opportunities have arisen as a result of this visit, such as helping children on the Cheyenne reservation through a Community Service opportunity, a link with the English teacher at the reservation school and an invitation for a few students to attend a session of the UN Working Group for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as observers," explained Jane Powell, upper school English teacher.

ISL and Cargolux help out

Students, teachers and parent volunteers worked relentlessly before and after school to collect and package bedlinen, tents, children's clothes and school books that the school's community collected to send to an orphanage in Thailand. "School for Life", is a school based on a farm in Chiang Mai, Thailand, and has been supported by ISL middle school students for the past year. In the next months, "School for Life" expects to take on an additional 50 to 70 children who have been orphaned as a result of the tsunami disaster. Middle school coordinator Leila El-Chehabi explained, "We knew, as did so many others, that we had to respond in some way to the needs of the people left destitute by the tsunami. We already have connections at 'School for Life' and when we realised that the project there was taking on a whole new dimension, we knew that this was the most beneficial help we could give initially. We collected new and used items from our school community to meet the needs as outlined to us by our teaching colleagues in Thailand. Streff provided boxes and Cargolux supported our efforts by shipping the goods to Thailand, and the Red Cross took the goods on to Chaing Mai."



The Snow Queen - A sparkling, spine-tingling musical

The lower school musical production of the Snow Queen was one that, above all else, sparkled and tingled with excitement and enthusiasm. The third, fourth and fifth grade adaptation of Hans Christian Anderson's fairytale was directed by lower school music teacher Felicity Bryson. "I came across the score of the Snow Queen by Kay Umansky and Ana Sanderson whilst on a day's choral workshop in London, and my immediate thought was of my fifth grade group. After studying the score, I realised it would work with the third through fifth graders. It was a perfect match for this age group. This is a wonderful age to teach as they are capable of so much and willing to work hard and overcome challenges, without necessarily recognising them as challenging," explained Ms Bryson.

The original score is written for piano, with the option of using recorded music. The decision was made to use live music in order to give the production its own hallmark and to allow more opportunities for students. Ivana Milojewic accompanied on keyboards, with third grade teacher Robert Hall on drums. Felicity Bryson arranged parts for euphonium, flute and brass quartet which were played by lower school students, Katie Cannon, Jacqueline McLaughlin and Frances MacDonald. ISL's Musical Director, Peggy Jenks wrote a Fanfare for the show which was performed by the fifth grade trumpeters, Naoto Tabata, Jesper Wiedenkiller, CJ Rolka and Costantino Ciotti. Middle

school students also stepped in to help the lower school musicians, with Alex MacDonald on baritone, and Silja Lehtinen on the French horn.

The acting parts were spread amongst the third, fourth and fifth grade with Freya Dodsworth as the Snow Queen, Alexander Roach as Kay and Bregje de Vet as Gerda. The chorus was very strong and their participation carried the show. This was a demanding production with over 130 students involved. "The professionalism of the children was stunning, and they were so enthusiastic. Equally the support from parents and other staff members was superb," explained Ms Bryson.

"The most rewarding thing for me was seeing how much the students blossomed and gained in confidence from the beginning to the end of the production. This was an experience that will stay with them for life!" concluded Ms Bryson.



Sports continue to play...

As every year, sport continues to play an important role in life at ISL. ISL sponsors after-school sports such as soccer, volleyball, basketball, swimming, and track and field, and maintains a physical education programme as part of the overall curriculum. Most weekends, teams from ISL take part in games with other NECIS (Northern European Council of International Schools) teams. The school is at the moment in the middle of the basketball season, and games are hosted regularly at the Geeseknappchen campus. The sports department now looks forward to hosting the NECIS annual swim meet on the 23rd and 24th of April.

Partnership Profile

The Partnership (PTN.) interview with Ernst & Young:

Mr Alain Kinsch, partner with Ernst & Young Luxembourg and member of the Board of Governors of ISL and Mr Kenneth Hay (right of picture), CEO and Managing Partner of Ernst & Young Luxembourg



PTN. How long has Ernst & Young been supporting ISL's technology programme?

K. Hay: Ernst & Young has been supporting ISL's technology infrastructure since 2000 by contributing to the leasing costs of over 70 PCs used in the school's classrooms. We have been really impressed by how the school uses state-of-the-art education tools and embeds technology in both the learning methods and the curriculum. This is what has convinced us each year to continue to support the school's IT infrastructure.

PTN. In what other ways do you support the school and how did you become involved?

K. Hay: Apart from our contribution to technology, Ernst & Young also supports ISL through the involvement of Alain Kinsch in the Board of Governors of the School. Mr. Kinsch has been an elected member of the Board since December 2001, focusing in particular on the school's relations with the Luxembourg community and bringing to the school his experience of the Luxembourg political and social community, which has proved useful on specific issues.

PTN. Is the support provided by Ernst & Young a local initiative or part of a global philanthropic programme that the company runs?

K. Hay: Ernst & Young is involved in some major philanthropic initiatives throughout the world, generally decided upon at local level. We view ourselves not only as business people but also as corporate citizens with a responsibility towards the local community. We contribute to areas where we feel we can really make a difference. For example, we contribute our professional know-how towards a number of think tanks on the Luxembourg economy. Our partners are also active in various service clubs and charity organisations. We are a sponsor of SOS-Interfonds, a major Luxembourg organisation funding SOS villages for underprivileged children. We also contribute to the arts by being the main sponsor of a young Luxembourg pianist whose talents are now being recognised worldwide.

PTN. Why is technology the area that is of particular interest to your company?

A. Kinsch: Technology has been one of the major

drivers of business transformation and globalisation over the last thirty years and has also had an increasing impact on education throughout the world. We support stronger integration of technology into the educational process as an efficient way of both better preparing children for their adult lives and making education more efficient.

Allowing a maximum number of students to access desktop or laptop solutions during class time, thereby enabling teachers to use technology as a practical tool for education and communication can be seen as one priority area.

PTN. Due to the use of technology in the classroom, teaching methods have changed quite dramatically in the past decade. How do you envisage technology influencing education in the future?

A. Kinsch: Technology enables students to access, organise and exchange knowledge. Today, knowledge can be accessed everywhere and in real-time; possession of knowledge in itself no longer represents the most crucial learning objective. What is required are the skills to be able to filter and understand available information in order to use such knowledge as a tool to engage in critical and analytical thinking. This is of course not a new phenomenon but it has been dramatically accelerated by technology. This is the point I want to make: technology is a tool that helps to access the relevant information quicker, in a more efficient manner if used appropriately, and to better share information and thus also render the operational aspect of teaching methods more efficient. Technology, however, does not replace the key learning objectives of being able to analyse information, develop a critical mind and a healthy skepticism and draw a sensible and well-supported conclusion. To draw the full benefit from technology, we must learn the habit of continuous learning: we then know how to learn the specialised knowledge when needed as we proceed through our professional lives.

PTN. Can you identify parallels between the changes in education and the changes in the workplace?

K. Hay: The single most important change in corporate education is that it has become a truly continuous process over the entire life of a professional. People can no longer rely only on knowledge or skills gained at the beginning of their career. The accelerated pace of change in market needs and regulations, together with the shift to an economy of empowered professionals in more flexible organisations, means that knowledge requirements, and sometimes careers, change more frequently. People must therefore continuously adapt their skills in order to be able to bring the right and innovative products to the market. Ernst & Young Luxembourg recruited over 70 university graduate professionals around September 2004, most of whom started their lifelong learning journey with a 3-week intensive training programme. They will continue each year to undergo monthly in-house and external training courses on both technical subject matters and so-called soft skills such as communication or people management. This continuous learning programme never stops.