

STRAIGHTFORWARD USES OF IWBs IN GEOGRAPHY: INTRODUCTION

Electronic interactive whiteboards (IWBs) have now been used in schools for nearly a decade. Indeed, rapid growth in the adoption of IWBs is notable across all sectors of education. They continue to be a focus for future spending and growth in schools, and their numbers have not yet reached a plateau. Their scope for improving the quality of the classroom experience, for both students and teachers, is widely recognized. IWBs have enormous potential in promoting highly stimulating and effective teaching and learning, positive class involvement, efficient reviewing of material covered, differentiated learning within mixed ability teaching groups, and the targeting of special needs.

IWB technology is a significant component of the wider technology infrastructure promoted by BECTA (2007). They recognize that teachers who use IWBs can work more effectively, because they are freer to engage with their students and have more flexible access to tools and resources to respond to learners' needs. When used appropriately, IWB technology allows lessons to be more dynamic and 'allows teachers to engage more effectively with learners'. Clearly an initial investment of time is required when preparing 'flipchart' lessons for IWBs. However, once created, flipcharts can be saved and used again - ideally improved following review, reflection and updating. Ultimately, there is strong evidence to suggest that time is saved in the long run. This is particularly relevant given that IWB technology allows teachers to share their best resources with colleagues, including those in other institutions.

IWBs act as a focus for learners' attention and increase engagement in classroom-based learning. Furthermore, at a time when debate rages over the challenges posed by demotivated students, IWB technology offers considerable scope to engage the disaffected. Kitchen et al (2007) report clear gains in pupil motivation, classroom enthusiasm and attendance at Key Stage 3 in secondary schools using IWBs. In short, the flexibility and visual power of such media can often engage pupils from lower-achieving groups - especially reluctant readers and those struggling with numeracy (Ofsted 2004).

Cuthell (2004) commented on the positive impact on lesson preparation and delivery - the most committed teachers stressing that 'the "fun" element has returned to the classroom'. Learning can be transformed. More interactive, participative lessons give learners a role within the classroom beyond simply being 'passive recipients of knowledge'. Visual, aural and kinaesthetic models are supported powerfully, ICT skills are seen in context, investigative learning is facilitated, and any activities involving data such as charts, graphs and diagrams are made more effective. In short, 'if students are able to move through the stages of a process and visualize each one, then concept acquisition is enhanced'.

In conclusion, whilst certainly not the sole means for delivering lessons, IWBs are an empowering technology, promoting creativity and enabling the delivery of rewarding

learning experiences for all students, across a range of learning styles. Through a series of straightforward examples, firmly rooted in classroom practice and research at Lincoln Minster School, we will demonstrate, explain and justify a number of highly effective, key techniques – so enabling you to develop your own teaching resources and supporting materials.

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For further information, or INSET enquiries, contact us at:

Tim.bayliss@church-schools.com
Lawrence.collins@church-schools.com

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