



Designing Effective Projects : Projects to Engage Learners

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Managing ICT

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ICT Resources

There are several online resources with strategies for managing ICT in the classroom.

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Classroom Management of Resources and ICT Access

ICT can play a big part in project-based learning. The use of ICT enhances the learning experience and allows learners make connections to the outside world. It gives learners a place to find resources and to create work products. Efficient management of available ICT during projects takes planning and organization.

The One-Computer Classroom

One of the biggest challenges many teachers face is the lack of computers. Even with only one computer in the classroom, there are many ways to use ICT effectively to improve learner learning.

- Pair learners up and set up a daily computer use schedule.
- Try to find time to have open blocks of time for individual learner use.
- Use a timer to keep learners to their time limits.
- Make sure computer time is used for creating products and doing research. All other pre-planning work should be done ahead of time (storyboards are a good way to do this).
- Use teacher-created templates for learners to fill in to save time.
- Display posters using computer terms and commands.
- Make sure computer etiquette and guidelines have been modelled.

In a one-computer classroom, learners can conduct research in smaller chunks of time, create work products piece by piece, and send and receive email to outside experts. Time is probably the biggest issue with a one-computer classroom, but through creative scheduling, computer use can happen. For example, allowing learners to work on the computer when they have finished with other work is a resourceful solution. Another solution is to group learners and give them a day of the week for their computer day.

On the designated days, particular groups of learners have access to the computer. They can work independently or in pairs depending on the work that needs to be completed. If a computer is open and not being used by a member of the assigned group, anyone can use it until it is needed.

Learning Stations

Learning stations provide teachers and learners a structured way to rotate through a small number of computers during class time. With access to three or four computers, learners get more time and extended opportunities to work with ICT to create projects. Stations should be connected to one another in a way that makes sense for the learners to rotate through in a timely fashion. These stations can be set up so the content they are learning and work they are producing relates to each other. For example:

- Station One: Storyboard planning
- Station Two: Peer reviewing and feedback
- Station Three: Revising and drafting

- Station Four: Computer use to create work products
- Station Five: Computer use: researching, working with experts on the computer, publishing

The amount of time devoted to learning stations depends on how much time is available and the amount of work that will be expected of the learners. The important piece in using learning stations effectively is making sure learners are aware of what to do at each station through teacher modeling and monitoring. They should be held accountable for their work with checklists and/or teacher conferencing and have a place to store their works in progress for the next day.

Computer Labs

Computer labs are another way to get learners using ICT. With the use of computer labs, learners are given chunks of time during the week to use computers. With these labs, learners must come prepared with the work they need to complete using the computer. Because time is always limited, learners need to be able to work independently and efficiently. Depending on how many computers there are, learners can work on the computers independently or in pairs. Non-computer learning stations can take place in the classroom beforehand, and the computer station can be saved for the visit to the lab.