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**A LEARNING COMMUNITY THROUGH  
INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION  
TECHNOLOGY:**

**CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESS IN A CONTRIBUTING  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

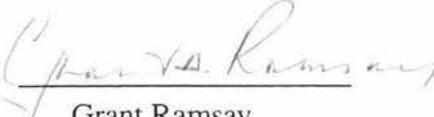
A thesis submitted as partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of  
Education Administration, Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand

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1999

## DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis, A learning Community Through Information and Communication Technology: Characteristics of Success in a Contributing Primary School, represents my own work, except where due acknowledgement is made, and that it has not been previously included in a thesis, dissertation or report submitted to this University or to any other institution for a degree, diploma or other qualification.

Signed:   
Grant Ramsay

Date: 21 12 99

## ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to identify how institutionalised teaching and learning practices and processes - 'the way we do things around here' - have led to successful teaching and learning with information and communication technology (ICT) at a large contributing New Zealand primary school. The research findings are considered against the backdrop of the international literature, historical trends, and current educational conditions for New Zealand schools in relation to ICT. Consideration is also given as to whether elements of teaching and learning with ICT at the case study school can be correlated with the Key Characteristics of Effective Schools identified by Sammons *et al*, (1995).

The research is conducted in three stages. Stage One considers national requirements for ICT teaching and learning and how the school has fashioned its operating guidelines to ensure the school-wide implementation of ICT. The ICT perceptions and experiences of staff, students and parents at the case study learning community are also presented. Stage Two examines actual ICT teaching and learning practices and processes throughout the school and in five selected classes in particular. Stage Three is a reflective review of the school respondents' views and experiences of teaching and learning with ICT.

The research establishes three important questions which must be asked (and answered) if successful school-wide implementation of teaching and learning with ICT is to be achieved: *Why* does the school believe it should teach and learn with ICT? *What* student learning with ICT is proposed to occur? *How* can the processes and practices of teaching and learning with ICT be put into place?

The research questions are designed to uncover the elements of teaching and learning with ICT at the case study school. However, these questions lead on to others concerning funding for, and research into, teaching and learning with ICT in New Zealand schools. A major contention of this research is that Government funding for ICT in schools should be linked to demonstrable improvements in student learning outcomes. The research also contends that immediate adoption of 'practised and proven' approaches already existent in some New Zealand schools would help many other schools improve teaching and learning with ICT in their respective learning communities.

Outcomes of the research identify and emphasise: an agreed school-wide philosophy on teaching and learning with ICT; focus on ICT pedagogy; a student-based approach; school responsibility for teaching and learning with ICT; shared leadership and management through a specific and responsive 'human infrastructure'; a sound technological infrastructure; school-based and student-orientated teacher professional development; confident and competent staff; and regular review of school and student performance/achievement in teaching and learning with ICT.

The thesis concludes by noting that change, and how this affects people, presents the greatest challenge for schools attempting to implement teaching and learning with ICT. It is the hard work, determination and coordinated efforts of the people in the learning community that will bring about successful learning with ICT for students.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis is the product of 27 years of challenges, frustrations and successes experienced as a teacher in New Zealand schools. These experiences have been shared with a range of students and, in most instances, a highly skilled and dedicated group of teaching colleagues.

The successful implementation of teaching and learning with ICT has eluded and continues to elude many schools. The main reason for this is that the role of ICT in teaching and learning has, in my opinion, often been misrepresented or hi-jacked by people in industry, 'supporting' educational agencies and those in positions of influence within Government and the Ministry of Education. These people have generally sought to serve their own business, personal or political interests. Furthermore, all too often these 'fountains of knowledge' have had only the most tenuous of links with the 'real world' of education. Thus, they have never been required to implement their own doctrines and bring about school-wide change in teaching and learning with ICT. This study focuses on New Zealand students and what we as New Zealand teachers already know and can do in our learning communities. It is time for the voices of schools to be heard and acted upon.

My thanks go to the many teachers I have had the opportunity to work with and learn from, and in particular to the staff, Board of Trustees and wider community of Papatoetoe Central School for having the collective foresight, backbone and commitment to focus on the provision of learning opportunities and experiences for every student in our learning community.

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