

# INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

## Interactive Whiteboards

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I started to teach French at Wanganui High School in 2006 and as I had 3 years' experience with Interactive Whiteboards (IWB), was given one within 6 months. I have been using it every lesson and have now developed an extensive bank of resources.

At the time, I was one of the first language teachers to be equipped with an interactive whiteboard in New Zealand. I believe there are now a handful of us, even though I have not met everyone. During the French Immersion weekend, organised by Ruth Bourchier in the July 2008 holidays, I presented a workshop about using the IWB in the language classroom. The teachers of French who were present showed a lot of interest and below are a few questions they asked me.

What is an interactive Whiteboard?

In fact, it's quite similar to a PowerPoint presentation but with lots more gadgets: highlighters, timers, spotlight and video recording mode are just examples of what you can use. The biggest advantage is that all your presentations are saved for future use. All you need is a computer and a projector.

Isn't it for the technology geeks?

Well, I have always been a technophobe and the IWB has been a fun way of discovering new communicative tools. Moreover, students are more than happy to help, should there be a glitch.

How can Interactive Whiteboards benefit your teaching of Languages?

Not only have I found that numbers of students studying French within the school significantly rose, but also that the number of boys increased and the students seemed more focussed on the teaching. They love the clarity of presentations, the variety of exercises, and of course, the fact that they very often come and use the board themselves.

How do students respond?

This is one of my Y11 students: The technology and functions of the board capture and hold attention. It motivates students to participate, put in the effort and get involved. It is an absolute privilege to have a board in the classroom!

Recently, I have also been involved in a Research Project about the use of ICT in Language Teaching. My question was whether the use of the Interactive Whiteboard helped students remember and assimilate vocabulary and grammar structures more efficiently than a normal classroom set up. The results will be published in a national report. Something to watch out for!

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