



**AN CHOMHAIRLE MHÚINTEOIREACHTA**  
*The Teaching Council*

**The Impact of the Interactive Whiteboard on a Multi-grade Irish Primary School Setting**

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**Rationale and Aims**

This research sought to investigate: the impact of Interactive White Boards (IWB) on pupil learning in a multi-grade setting; the evolving role of the teacher in the context of cross-curricular embedded ICT; the contribution of multi-grade settings. The researcher aimed to carry out an extensive review of literature regarding the use of IWBs in education.

**Research Topic**

The research begins with an appreciation of the fact that technology and pedagogy are complementary and offer the opportunity to enhance pupils' learning. In this context, the researcher sets out to investigate the impact of IWBs on teachers and primary school pupils, within the particularities of a multi-grade setting. The researcher points to the literature arguing that the use of this technology can positively impact student motivation, engagement and the social dimensions to learning. In teaching, the literature indicates the benefits of flexibility and versatility, and a move to a more interactive process away from the didactic, teacher-centred practice. The researcher also argues that many teachers in multi-grade classrooms feel that the use of ICT could be very beneficial given sufficient resources.

**Design and Methodology**

The research was conducted in a small, mixed, two-teacher school in Munster, with 29 pupils being taught from junior infants to sixth class. Two classrooms were used. The researcher adopted a case study methodology, exploring the ways in which IWBs are used in teaching and learning. She used a number of data collection methodologies to triangulate findings including observations, interviews and bubble dialogue.

Ethical considerations were taken into account with permission sought to carry out the research at an early stage.

**Findings and Recommendations**

The researcher argues that the impact of IWBs in this multi-grade setting had been positive. Teachers reported changes in their practice and a corresponding increase in levels of motivation. The researcher also identified changes in the role that pupils take in their own learning, or co-learning, and increased attention on the artefacts of teaching and learning in the classroom. Other findings included the promotion of teacher mentoring; the perceived enrichment of curriculum; investment in classroom preparation; advantages in terms of the non-interrupted flow or momentum of the lesson; an increase

in the quality of group work; and the positive impact of peer learning in a multi-grade environment. The researcher also found that discipline did not appear to be an issue in the use of such an ICT aid.

The researcher argues that consideration should be given to installing IWBs in all classrooms in Irish primary schools. It is also noted that leadership promotes innovation, and that the integration of these technologies requires the support of the principal and Boards of Management.

Further research was suggested in investigating the impact of these technologies on measurable outcomes such as achievement and results.