Study Guide
Block 2:
Personal and professional development

Prepared for the Open University by Deirdre Cook,
Robert McCormick and Peter Scrimshaw
E851 Professional Development with ICT

E851 Course Team
Josephine Campbell
Deirdre Cook (Chair)
Deborah Cooper
Paul Hopkins
Robert McCormick
Sue Roberts (Course Coordinator)
Peter Scrimshaw
Helen Sturgess (Presentation Course Manager)

External assessor (E850 and E851)
Don Passey, University of Lancaster

This publication forms part of an Open University course E851 Professional Development with ICT. Details of this and other Open University courses can be obtained from the Course Information and Advice Centre, PO Box 724, The Open University, Milton Keynes MK7 6BZ, United Kingdom: tel. +44 (0)1908 653231, e-mail ciesgen@open.ac.uk

Alternatively, you may visit the Open University web site at http://www.open.ac.uk where you can learn more about the wide range of courses and packs offered at all levels by The Open University.

To purchase this publication or other components of Open University courses, contact Open University Worldwide Ltd, The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes MK7 6AA, United Kingdom: tel. +44 (0)1908 858785; fax +44 (0)1908 858787; e-mail ouweng@open.ac.uk; web site http://www.ouw.co.uk

The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes MK7 6AA.

Copyright © 2001, 2002 The Open University

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, transmitted or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without written permission from the publisher or a licence from the Copyright Licensing Agency Ltd. Details of such licences (for reprographic reproduction) may be obtained from the Copyright Licensing Agency Ltd of 90 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 0LP.

Edited, designed and typeset by The Open University.

Printed and bound in the United Kingdom by The Open University.

SIP 62563 1

2.1

201 006985 160256362 1
E851 Professional Development with ICT

Contents

Introduction 5

Weeks 7–9: Professional and school development 6

The development of ICT 8

Using ICT in the curriculum 9

Using ICT in administration and management 12

Using ICT to develop links among schools 13

Using ICT to develop home–school links 15

Establishing priorities for development 18

Week 10: TMA 02 – Combining personal and school priorities 19

References 19

Acknowledgement 19
E851 Professional Development with ICT

Introduction

Block 2 of the Study Guide deals with your personal and professional development, offering guidance on how you could think through and what aspect of your professional life you might want to explore. The action plan that you carried out as part of E850 [a requirement of the New Opportunities Fund (NOF) training], and which you revised in Block 1, is a central component of your work here. You will need to review the action plan revisions that you made as you began working on E851 Block 1 in the light of your work there as well as the ideas presented here (revisions which at the time may have been very slight or quite substantial, depending on your individual situation). Naturally, we assume that ICT [information and communications technology] will be your focus, but this could be as much about how you use ICT for your professional development as about how you develop the use of ICT in your teaching.

An important theme of the block is the interrelationship between the individual teacher’s professional development on the one hand, and the school’s development on the other; so you will be asked to reflect on both your own development and that of the school. It may be that your professional development is tied up with a smaller unit than the whole school, for example, a year group (or combination of years, e.g. KS1 and KS2 in primary) or a department. Much will depend on how your school is organized for the purposes of developing pupils, curriculum and staff.

The objectives for the block are to enable you to:

1. formulate a view of your professional development;
2. analyse the development plan for your school (or year group, department, etc.) in terms of how it envisages the use of ICT;
3. review your currently evolving action plan in the light of your professional development and the school’s development, which includes looking at the relationship between the two.

These objectives will form the basis of your work for TMA 02, of which revisions to your action plan form an integral part. The activities over the next few weeks will work towards this review. You should turn to the Assessment Guide to see what is required for TMA 02, so that you can see the context for your work on this block.

The work over the next four weeks involves thinking about the following:

1. The nature of professional development and school development.
2. The provision of professional development in your school.
3. The nature of ICT development, which could form the subject of your professional development and your school’s development.
4. How you will review your action plan so as to combine your professional development and your school’s development (the work for TMA 02).

We have not split this work into a weekly set of readings, activities, etc., as so much will depend on your previous work, personal priorities and on school priorities. However, we have assumed that you will spend the final week (Week 10) working on the TMA.

You should already have your action plan for E851, indicating the changes you made at the beginning of this course, but you will also need access to your school’s development plan and to be able to investigate how it deals with ICT, so make sure that you have made the proper arrangements for this. You may
E851 Professional Development with ICT

have to talk to the person responsible for the development plan, or for the ICT aspect of it (e.g. a deputy head, senior teacher or the ICT coordinator). You will also have to learn something about how your school deals with professional development; again, you will require access to any relevant documents and to the people responsible for them.

Weeks 7–9: Professional and school development

(30–36 hours)

Your work over these three weeks will be directed towards the first two objectives of the block and will therefore involve thinking about the first three items in the second of the lists given above. You will establish:

- what it means to develop professionally and how this relates to your school's development;
- the kinds of development you want to focus on, bearing in mind your action plan and the school development plan.

To begin your exploration, the first reading in this block outlines some ways of thinking about both professional and school development.

Reading 7

Read Craft, Chapter 3, 'Principles of professional and institutional development'. In this chapter, Anna Craft outlines the characteristics of effective individual development and how this relates to reflection, and the use of evidence derived from practice. She goes on to consider the principles of effective school development and improvement. She also deals with identifying the needs of individuals and schools, of the processes that support this identification, and the plans that try to meet those needs. As you read this chapter, clarify for yourself the principles Craft is trying to establish, and reflect on the investigation you did in Block 1. Consider the debate Craft mentions about the nature and use of evidence in education and the role of 'experiential knowledge' in professional learning. Note any ways in which the outcomes of your Block 1 investigation might have an impact on your practice.

(In your work for E850 you will have already attempted to identify your own professional needs, but not those of your school. Craft's Task 5 will help you analyse your school's development plan.)

Activity 6

Reviewing your action plan (20 minutes)

We want you now to review again your E851 action plan and your school's development plan, in the light of Reading 7 (Craft, Chapter 3). As you do so, consider the following questions:

- What views do you have about the nature of your professional development and the development of your school?
- Which elements of your action plan are directed towards your professional development, and which are directed towards school development?
- Are these elements of development balanced, or are they biased in one direction or the other?
E851 Professional Development with ICT

- In the light of the ICT elements of the school development plan, what do you need to consider regarding your professional development?
- What might you need to change in your action plan, and why?

Keep a note of your answers to these questions in your Professional Portfolio, for your work on TMA 02. Your investigation in Block 1 may also have made you want to change your action plan, so bear this in mind as you consider the final question above.

We expect your ideas on the nature of professional and school development to change as you work through this block, and that you will reflect on your answers to the questions in Activity 6 as the weeks go by. Reflection is one of the characteristics of professional development to which Craft alluded. In discussing reflection and the use of evidence, she was foreshadowing a particular concept of personal learning, the subject of the next reading.

Reading 8

Read Craft, Chapter 11, 'Personal learning as a professional'. In this chapter Craft argues that personal development and professional development are linked and that we need to see development as a learning process. In particular, she argues that an individual's personal views on teaching and learning, including what she/he thinks the purposes of education are, will have a substantial effect on that individual's development. Developments such as the use of ICT in the classroom may require you to re-examine your views – or indeed to take a proper look at them for the first time, as they may have been implicit (what she calls 'theory in action'). We will come back to this later, but for the moment we want you to focus on the nature of your personal and professional development, what you think is involved and how this relates to your career or stage in teaching. As you read this chapter, think through the following questions/issues:

- Do you see your views on the goals of education and theories of learning in the characterization given by Eisner (described by Craft in this chapter)? Note down elements that are not covered, or give alternatives. Of the outlined views on goals of education and theories of learning, which best characterizes your own views as evidenced by your action plan revisions?

- In your work on this course you have been asked to keep notes of various kinds in a Professional Portfolio, as a way of facilitating professional reflection. Use the material you have included to help you form a view of yourself as being involved in 'reflection on action'.

- How would you like to see professional development provided, and how should it be related to your career or stage in the teaching profession?

Web site work

The BECTa (British Educational Communications and Technology Agency) web site contains an area specifically for senior managers in schools, which has sections relating to professional development in ICT:

- Developing an ICT policy, which provides tools that will help with developing the use of ICT in school;
- Managing with ICT, with ideas on how to make the most of support staff while developing the use of ICT.

This web site work will help you to complete Activities 7 and 9.
E851 Professional Development with ICT

Activity 7

The provision of professional development in your school: structures and support mechanisms (1 hour)

How is professional development provided in your school? To answer this question, you may need to talk to the person responsible for it. You could also reflect on the way LSP or other NOF ICT training is handled; a conversation with the LSP School Organizer may help (and you could also ask to look through the School Organizer material). Investigate and note what new mechanisms, structures and roles have had to be put in place to support the work of staff members involved in the initiative (e.g. mentors or monitors of progress).

It may be that your school already has suitable structures in place, and that NOF training fits into these; in this case, reflect on and note the ways in which these structures have helped your professional development and perhaps that of your close colleagues.

Alternatively, the school may have had to put in place new structures; in which case you could consider the extent to which these may be helpful for any future professional development (whether or not it concerns ICT). Add your notes on these issues to your Professional Portfolio, as you will find these useful later.

Conference work

You should share your findings from Activity 7 with other students in your tutor group conference. This will enable you to see if the issues raised and the mechanisms of how your school deals with professional development can be compared. You could also learn from the practice of others.

The development of ICT

So far we have focused on the principles and processes of professional development and school development, rather than on their substance, although of course in Activity 6 you will have noted the topics and areas for development regarding ICT in your action plan and the school development plan. Now we want you to focus on the development plan topics and areas, and to re-examine them in the light of some new considerations. This re-examination will allow you to be clear about what your priorities actually are and allow you to prioritize opportunities involving ICT within your target curriculum subject and your wider professional role. You will find such a focus helpful for TMA 02. Some of these priorities may link to your school development plan.

We will organize this re-examination against the following four headings:

1. The use of ICT in teaching and learning, and how it is manifest in the school curriculum.
2. The use of ICT in administration and management in the school.
3. The use of ICT in aiding relationships among schools.
4. The use of ICT in aiding school-community relationships.

Which of these you are primarily concerned with will depend upon your action plan and the school development plan. Read through the material below, which explores each of the four areas listed above, although you may
E851 Professional Development with ICT

want to explore only one or two of them in depth. The use of ICT in the curriculum must be one of those areas, and for this reason we have devoted more time to it.

As you make notes on the activities and readings associated with each of these areas, remember that, at the end, you will be asked in TMA 02 to state your priorities and those of the school, giving a rationale for these two sets of priorities, and exploring points of support and conflict between them. It might be helpful at this point to read through TMA 02.

Using ICT in the curriculum

We want first to pick up on the issues of teaching and learning, as they follow on from the work you did in Block 1 and the thinking you will have started with Reading 8 (Craft, Chapter 11). Any use of ICT will require you to consider, implicitly or explicitly, how you approach teaching and learning. Craft characterized this in terms of your 'educational philosophy' (i.e. what you thought was the main purposes of education) and your 'theory of learning'. In the next reading we take this a little further by asking you to consider how you view learners, your role as a teacher, and the knowledge that is the focus of your teaching and pupils' learning.

Reading 9

From your LSP Teacher Folder, read the extract from Scrimshaw (1997a), 'Computers and the teacher's role', in Developing Professional Practice, Unit 3, Preparing and Presenting Professional Material, pp. 46–57.

You may have read this material as part of your study for E850 or while working on LSP, in which case you should refer back to your notes. Either way, you may have to reread it in order to consider how the kinds of uses for ICT which you have been developing, or are now thinking about developing, will affect your view of learners, of your own role and of how you handle knowledge. Ask yourself the following:

- How do you view learners (receivers, explorers or creators), and how do you view the relationships among them (collaborators, competitors or isolated individuals)?
- What are the implication of your views of learners and learning relationships for your role and function(s) as a teacher?

In your notes, try to answer these questions by thinking of particular classroom activities you actually carry out, rather than attempting to answer them in the abstract. (In Reading 8, four families of models of teaching are categorized [Joyce and Weil, 1980, in Craft, p. 196], and these may also help you in answering the questions posed here.) You may, of course, find that you take different views on these questions in different situations; ask yourself why this is. Does it reflect an inconsistency on your part, or is it the case that it is quite legitimate to take different stances for different kinds of learners?

As you might expect, there is quite a bit of discussion on how we can view learners, and hence how pupils learn. In the two readings dealing with this (Readings 8 and 9), there are some variations in the way the two authors represent such views. Both cover at least two of the perspectives found in the literature on learning, although their categories overlap. The main views found in the literature are roughly of three kinds.
E851 Professional Development with ICT

First, there is the view which regards the learner as a processor of information, much as Scrimshaw discusses in his 'receiver of knowledge' theory. This view may see the need to use clear structures and ideas which are transmitted to learners for them to acquire (i.e. keep in their memory). This is usually called the information-processing view of learning.

The second view is similar to Craft's 'learning as development and construction' or Scrimshaw's depiction of learners as 'explorers' and 'creators' (it has dimensions of both of Scrimshaw's views of learners). This perspective regards learners as active in constructing their understanding, i.e. they are not just receivers, empty vessels, without an idea in their heads; rather, they will have some current understanding of a subject which needs to be adjusted (constructed) to fit an accepted view of, say, a scientific idea. Not surprisingly, this view of learning is called constructivism. Here the focus is on the individual learner, and other learners are seen in relation to helping that individual construct his/her understanding. This happens best when one learner is more experienced in the topic than the others, and can help the less experienced to resolve any difficulties. For example, if a pupil is trying to understand how 'friction' acts to slow objects down, discussion with another pupil who has some understanding may help to bridge the gap between what the first pupil thinks and the scientific explanation for friction.

This second view relates to Scrimshaw's idea of how we see relationships among learners. Notice that we talked about peer discussion, and not pupil–teacher discussion, as some views of constructivism (especially those based on Piaget) value peer interaction. However, there is another type of constructivism which favours the 'learners as collaborators' view of the relationships among learners discussed by Scrimshaw, which forms our next category.

This third category sees learning as a social affair, even when a learner is studying alone! Meaning is created through participating in social activity. The learning process is viewed not as the transmission of knowledge from the knowledgeable to the less knowledgeable, but as engagement in activity, participation in a community of practice. There is a construction process, but it is a social construction; when we learn, we learn to participate in a particular community. In traditional forms of learning, apprentices worked with the skilled tradespersons and learned to be part of that community (the trade), which is often called a 'community of practice'. In this view, the social interaction involves collaboration with peers and with experts (e.g. teachers), and learning with experts involves a form of collaborative problem-solving. The same thing happens in schools, where pupils learn to work in the community of the science laboratory or the mathematics classroom, and thus learn about the science and mathematics communities as they exist in schools. This will contain elements of learning that are peculiar to schools, and have little to do with science or mathematics in the world outside. This is a cultural or situated view of learning.

This latter view of 'learning to participate in a community' regards a community as represented by a subject (e.g. a community of scientists) or as an occupational group (e.g. health visitors). From this perspective, learning to be part of a community is not just the acquisition of concepts, but of ways of behaving, of values and hence of identity. Schools, and classrooms within them, form special types of communities, and learning in them is, in part, learning to be a student. Thus, classroom and school cultures are part of the 'content' of learning, as are the norms, values and practices of communities represented by school subjects (which are not represented in school as they are in life outside school). Students have to learn about carrying out a science
E851 Professional Development with ICT

experiment as scientists do, while also learning that the way to arrive at validity of outcomes may not be the same as in, say, religious studies. They also have to learn that the science laboratory has rules that are peculiar to schools, and these rules may not be the same as those operating, for example, in the English or mathematics class.

If you are using ICT, you may need to rethink your view of learning and the related issues of the role of the teacher and relationships with and between learners. But, as Scrimshaw argued in Reading 9, any need to rethink will depend upon the kind of ICT you are working with. The next activity invites you to revisit the questions asked in Reading 9, this time focusing on the use of ICT.

Activity 8

The use of ICT and views of teaching and learning (1 hour)

Choose any ICT-supported activity that you currently use, or are about to use, in the classroom. Consider any software involved in terms of its educational characteristics as outlined by Scrimshaw in Reading 9. In relation to that use, and the type of ICT-supported activity, consider the following questions:

- How do you view learners and the relationships among them?
- As a teacher, what do you see as your relationship with learners?
- Would you categorize your use of the computer here as predominantly 'a more effective curriculum resource' or as having potential for use as a 'catalyst for radical educational change'?

In thinking about these questions, ask yourself the following:

- Does the use of ICT require you to change your views in the way Scrimshaw indicated (in Reading 9) regarding the different uses of software? For example, if you are going to use a web-based activity, where pupils use web sites to carry out an investigation, will they be able to select them, or will you control the sites they use (e.g. by downloading them onto a school network or computer)? This reflects a view about how you give pupils access to knowledge.

- Does the use of ICT allow you to focus on the contribution it makes to the curriculum subject you have selected – that is, to pupils’ learning or enhancement of mathematical or historical concepts, for example, rather than their skills or competences? If this is not possible, set out a brief rationale for your alternative selection, giving reasons and evidence to support your decision.

Conference work

You should compare your responses to Activity 8 with those of other students in your tutor group conference. Provide a little of the context of the ICT-supported activity you chose as the basis for your answers, using that activity to make those answers concrete.

The ‘Why for me?’ section of the LSP CD-ROM (and in the Teaching in ... for each subject, primary or school librarian material) gives three different reasons for using ICT to improve existing practice, to extend existing practice, and to transform practice. The next reading regards these three approaches as having implications for three levels of change. If you want to improve practice, you may not have to change much about your teaching and
**E851 Professional Development with ICT**

your pupils’ learning – they will be learning the same things, doing the same kinds of learning activities, being assessed in similar ways, etc. However, if your practice is being transformed, you may need to undertake more change in your teaching. The article in Reading 10 depicts ‘practice’ in terms of pedagogy, because this term encapsulates the kinds of dimensions we have been dealing with (e.g. your view of learning, knowledge, relationships among learners and their relationships with teachers).

**Reading 10**

Read ‘Information and communications technology, knowledge and pedagogy’, by Robert McCormick and Peter Scrimshaw (Supplementary Reading). This picks up some of the ideas outlined in the LSP material, on how ICT might change practice, using some of the examples in the LSP material. Read up to, but not including, the final section. As you do so, think again about the use of ICT in your teaching context (which you considered in Activity 8). Will you need to rethink your answers to the questions you dealt with in that activity? Would you judge your Activity 8 example as one that will improve, extend or transform existing practice?

**Using ICT in administration and management**

The LSP material covered the main topics and issues in this use of ICT, and you should look back over your notes on this or reread those elements that are particularly relevant to you. The next reading directs you back to the LSP material.

**Reading 11**

*Improving professional efficiency*

From your LSP Teacher Folder, read the section entitled ‘Getting a grip on the problem’, in Developing Professional Practice, Unit 4, Improving Professional Efficiency, pp. 4–9. This covers five issues that are central to improving practice:

1. Using the school’s data and information sources, to save you time.
2. Using ICT to perform repetitive tasks.
3. Storing and retrieving information in a structured way.
4. Communicating with colleagues using ICT.
5. Using ICT to support your work with assessment, record keeping and reporting.

You may want to work through some of the material from Developing Professional Practice, Unit 4, again or in more detail than you did for the LSP programme or E850. Some of this work can take place using ICT within your area, to which you already have access; other work will require access to and knowledge of your school’s management information system. Add your notes on Reading 11 to your Portfolio – you will find them useful later.
E851 Professional Development with ICT

Web site work
The BECTa web site for senior managers referred to earlier (p. 7) also offers help with the use of computerised management information systems (CMIS). This currently gives guidance on the use of CMIS for increasing efficiency in administration, monitoring assessment and attendance, developing individual education plans (IEPs), improving communication and setting targets. Some of this advice will be of more specific interest to those in school who have a management role; nevertheless, it may give you some ideas on developing the use of ICT in this area.

Activity 9

Deciding a focus for work in administration and management
(1 hour)

Now that you have examined or reconsidered the potential of ICT to help with administration and management, you will need to be clear how this fits into the way this is done elsewhere in the school, if you want to make this a focus of your revised action plan. Talk to one or more of the following people, to help you clarify the focus and see what is practical:

- The person responsible for the school information management system.
- The ICT coordinator (if your school has one) or the person who handles issues relating to the computer system (so that you can see what access to data there is and how you can use the network to store and use information, e.g. for assessment purposes).
- The person responsible for the assessment system and the information associated with it (e.g. record-keeping and reporting).

Now take a look at the BECTa conference information on the Computerised Management Information Systems Project. The project's aims are:

- to investigate the use of CMIS in a sample of primary, secondary and special schools;
- to produce case studies of best practice relating to the use of ICT/CMIS in schools;
- to demonstrate how effective use of information systems might enable senior managers in schools to improve their strategic management skills.

A range of software systems features in the project, and links to each of their web sites are provided. You will also find quotations from senior managers highlighting the benefits of using ICT for their staff, students, parents and governors in areas such as administration, assessment, attendance, IEPs, communication and setting targets.

Using ICT to develop links among schools

An increasing number of schools are using ICT to develop relationships with other schools. These links take a number of forms and will be much affected by pre-existing relationships between schools in the locality. Prior to recent developments in ICT in schools, the government set up a number of projects to explore various issues, which resulted in a report that drew together the outcome of this exploration. Scrimshaw (1997b) noted:

Single age range clusters (such as those comprising only local primary schools) allow for joint curriculum and staff development and the exchange of resource materials and ideas. On the other hand, co-operation in such clusters might be hampered if the participants were competing with each other for learners.
EBS1 Professional Development with ICT

Where schools or colleges are in active competition, other patterns of linkage may fit their requirements better. One structure that emerged in some projects (although not necessarily because those involved favoured a competitive strategy) was that of a single institution linked to several current or potential feeder institutions [...]. This clearly had the potential to strengthen links with the feeders, and thus with potential future learners in them.

Another possibility for competitively minded institutions is to use the creation of national electronic networks to 'leap over' nearby rivals in order to establish co-operative relationships with more distant institutions, either in the UK or beyond [...].

Schools and colleges that are broadly favourable to local co-operation can work with their feeder institutions, but can opt for full involvement in local multi-level networks and local same-age groupings, too. This gives them considerable flexibility in choosing partners for particular activities, and access to a wider range of support and resources than a competitive institution.

Both competitive and co-operative institutions are essentially outward looking. But many ICT-capable schools and colleges, from necessity or choice, are more preoccupied with internal matters. For these self-reliant schools and colleges, electronic networking may be of little interest; what deters them from electronic communication is not the electronic aspect, but that they see no commensurate benefit for their learners in external communication per se. Nevertheless, accessing resources from the Internet, an interactive TV site or CD-ROMs could remain an attractive option for them and might prove to be an entry point from which they could choose to move on to more interactive activities later. For self-reliant schools and colleges, the requirements from a local network are only that it should provide reliable physical connectivity and access to the national and local resources they need. Such schools and colleges did not appear to be that common in the EDSI (Education Departments' Superhighways Initiative) projects, but possible examples could be found, and they may be more common in the wider school and college system.

(Scrimshaw, 1997b, pp. 37-8)

Activity 10

Your links with other schools (2 hours)

The quote from the Superhighways Initiative Report above mentions some of the topics on which schools can work together (joint curriculum and staff development, and exchange of resources), and suggests strategies where schools feel they can co-operate locally or where they are in competition. (Developing Professional Practice, Unit 1, Communicating with colleagues, pp. 42-51, puts forward an example of joint curriculum development using the Safe Routes to School project.) Investigate if there are any such projects within your school, particularly those that might be appropriate for you and your immediate colleagues to get involved in. If there are no such projects, discuss with your colleagues whether any could be started and if they should be with local schools only or with schools who may not be in competition. (It may be useful to see if there are any local authority initiatives; try its web site or any local conferences.) Note down the points they make.
E851 Professional Development with ICT

Conference and web site work

Follow up your investigation for Activity 10 by carrying out a search on web sites and on conferences to which you have access (particularly the LSP and E851 national conferences). You may also be able to use your E851 tutor group conference to see if anyone has set up a project you could learn from or in which you could participate.

Using ICT to develop home–school links

Increasingly, ICT is being used to develop links between homes and schools. In the reading that follows, Don Passey, a prominent researcher in ICT, reviews what has been achieved and what remains to be done in what he calls ‘home–school–community activities’. He carries out this review in the context of the development of the ‘connected learning community’ envisaged by the government when it set up the National Grid for Learning to create a ‘learning society’. This clearly takes the agenda well outside the concerns of schools and the school curriculum, although they can both act as a starting-point.

Reading 12

Read Passey, ‘How will teachers be prepared for the “connected learning community”? ’ (Supplementary Reading), which is an extract from a paper to a conference in Finland. As you read, consider whether any of the strategies mentioned are already in place or could be developed in your school. In particular, note in his ‘Conclusions’ the possible ways in which out-of-school time could be harnessed and the implications for preparing teachers for such activities.

One major project, mentioned by Passey, was the Anytime Anywhere Learning (AAL) project, in which a number of primary and secondary schools tried out the use of laptops with pupils to explore ways of linking home and school. The project was funded and led by Microsoft, and evaluated by a team from Lancaster University (you will find the web site address in the E851 national conference Resources folder). The evaluators identified a number of key questions for schools to address if they wanted to promote this sort of partnership (see the box overleaf).
Conference and web site work

Look up the web site for the AAL project in the E851 national conference Resources folder. Consider if any of the activities outlined there will help you determine what could be done in your school.

The AAL project evaluation team picked out three ways in which such work could develop in future (see the box on p. 17).
The web sites of other schools can often provide ideas on what can be done in the area of home-school links, as this is often the way in which the links are actually made. Have a look at some sites for such ideas, though be aware that access to areas for pupils and parents often require a password and ID.

On the LSP website you will find a link to a site belonging to a school in the USA (see 'Useful sites', Developing Professional Practice, Unit 3, on the LSP website), which provides a learning resource both to pupils and those outside the school.

Parents Online, set up to help parents benefit from the developments in the use of ICT, gives examples of school web sites and raises a number of issues that will help when thinking about links to the home.
E851 Professional Development with ICT

BECTa also has an area of its web site dedicated to the best of school web sites, i.e. those that have been given an annual award (UK School and College Web Site Awards).

You will find details of these and other resources in the E851 national conference Resources folder.

Activity 11

Your school’s home-school links (1 hour)

Now that you have seen what is possible, ask yourself if this is an area that you or your school should pursue. If it is likely to be a new venture for your school, you will have to be clear how it fits into existing home-school links, or whether it will be an extension of curriculum issues (e.g. allowing pupils access to sources or material on the school network from home). If such a venture requires pupils to have access to the school network from home, it will be necessary to discuss this with the ICT coordinator or the person responsible for the network. (Such a new venture will mean the development of a school web site, so if your school does not have one, then setting one up is a prior step in the development.) Add your notes on this topic to your Professional Portfolio.

Establishing priorities for development

At the beginning of the section on the development of ICT, we asked you to re-examine your priorities for development which were in your action plan. We organized this under the four headings relating to the curriculum, administration and management, school-school relationships, and home-school relationships (see p. 8). The next activity asks you to review this re-examination and to make a start at setting some priorities for your work, priorities that you will try to finalize for TMA 02. In preparing this TMA you will be asked to make some decisions about which of the four areas you will select for inclusion in your report.

Activity 12

Setting your priorities for professional development (2 hours)

Looking back over Activities 8-11, draw together what could now be your priorities for professional development. Compare these with your review in Activity 6. It is likely that some of your ‘personal’ priorities will not be easily confined to one of these four headings (ICT in the curriculum, in administration and management, in links among schools, and in home-school links), and that they will overlap with possible or actual school priorities which you explored in that activity. ‘Personal’ priorities may also include some reference to your targets in improving the level of your own ICT skills so that development here continues to be ongoing.

In Week 10 you will go on to consider how the priorities identified in the Activity 12 should be combined with those of the school, building on the argument made in Reading 7 (Craft, Chapter 3).
Week 10: TMA 02 – Combining personal and school priorities

(10–12 hours)

This week is set aside for you to complete TMA 02. This is designed to allow you to report the review of your action plan, which has been the focus of your work for the last four weeks. You will find the details of the TMA in the Assessment Guide. When you have completed the TMA, send it to your tutor, making sure that you keep a copy for your own records.

References


Acknowledgement

Grateful acknowledgement is made to the following source for permission to reproduce material in this book: