

winner of the 2006 ICTEV leader of the year:

JILL READING, WESTERN METROPOLITAN REGION, DE&T

Jill Reading, Western Metropolitan Region, DE&T is the 2006 recipient of the ICTEV Award for Outstanding Leadership in the use of ICT in Education.

INTRODUCTION

Jill Reading has held the position of eLearning Curriculum Consultant with Western Metropolitan Region for the past five years. During this time she has initiated many professional development programs for teachers, mentored eLearning leaders in schools and supported schools to grow in the area of ICT.

Jill is the Executive Officer of the eLearning Project Team (Dotcom) which has working parties that develop a strategic eLearning focus for the Region, run teacher professional development networks, allocated the Zing Systems (Groupsters) owned by the Region, and contributed to the procedures for publishing the Region's website.

In 2004 Jill implemented two new programs for schools in the West - Digital Portfolios for Authentic Assessment, and the Re@ct Film Festival where teachers and students were taught the skills of film making. Since then she has worked with various teacher groups advocating film as an alternative student voice to many traditional methods currently used in schools.

Prior to her regional role, Jill worked as a Learning Technology Network Leader and Professional Development Network Leader. She came from the role of Learning Technology Coordinator at Keilor Heights Primary school where she was a leader in the use of Learning Technologies in classrooms and regularly demonstrated this within her school, to teachers from around the state and to interstate visitors. From her classroom she also led professional development in a variety of areas related to computer use and classroom planning.

IN RESPONSE TO AWARD CRITERIA

ADVOCACY, SUPPORT AND PROMOTION OF THE USE OF ICT IN EDUCATION

Jill has been working as a consultant for Western Metropolitan Region of DE&T since March 2000 where she has been a strong advocate for the use of ICT in education both as a teacher and as an eLearning Curriculum Consultant for WMR. Jill has had the opportunity to promote the use of ICT in all aspects of

education and all sectors of schooling. Western Region has close to 150 government primary, secondary and special schools.

In her role as Teaching & Learning Consultant Jill has played a key role in leading teams such as the Dotcom Working Party, Zing Selection Committee, Web Page Working Party and eLearning Teacher networks. Jill is also a member of a statewide group of eLearning Consultants who meet with DE&T central staff monthly. This group plays an important role in providing feedback to each other on programs as well as providing input on the development of policy and directions at a statewide level.

Outside the DE&T system Jill is a member of the Victorian Information Technology Teachers' Association (VITTA) and has been a past State Council member of ICTEV. Membership of these associations demonstrates her high commitment and passion to the inclusion of eLearning at a statewide level.

Throughout Jill's teaching career, she has demonstrated knowledge of the ways students learn through her exemplary classroom programs. As a leader within schools, Jill has been able to use this knowledge in working with other teachers and leaders. In her current role, she has continued to develop knowledge and understandings in this area and used this to support schools in the Western Metropolitan Region.

As a member of the Teaching & Learning team, Jill is highly aware of the need to be effective in her work with teachers and school leaders with the aim of improving teaching practice and student outcomes. Jill is committed to providing professional development at a school, network or regional level in a manner that is responsive to needs. An up-to-date knowledge of the best conditions for learning is necessary for this to be most effective. Jill always seeks to improve her knowledge as well as sharing this knowledge with those around her.

Current research has impacted significantly on what we know about student learning and now, more than ever, teachers need to continually update their professional knowledge. This knowledge needs to encompass the latest practices in education and ways to foster learning in a range of learning environments to assist in creating an environment capable of extending children to achieve their full potential. The introduction of eLearning to schools has enabled teachers to better cater for a variety of individual learning styles and further develop teaching skills at the same time. It has enabled teachers and students to

share the learning journey and has provided a vehicle for teachers to work in networks with others to share curriculum ideas and technological expertise.

Indicators of Jill's advocacy, support and promotion of the use of ICT in education include:

- Participating in the ongoing development of WMR's Early Years Strategy.
- Promoting multiliteracies through PD forums.
- Inclusion of eLearning and Digital Portfolios at Early Years sessions.
- Organisation of new projects in the area of eLearning (Digital Portfolios, Re@ct Film Festival).
- Selecting schools to participate in ANSN's Kidsmart project - an eLearning preschool to school transition program.
- Conducting regional training for Middle Years Numeracy Leaders on teacher support materials and other online resources.
- Leading staff in the inclusion of eLearning into their term planning.
- Supporting teachers to undertake eLearning projects.
- Leading the Dotcom Working Party (an eLearning steering committee) within the region.
- Leading the ongoing development of the region's website.
- Building partnerships with external groups and companies to support WMR schools: lab3000, The Victorian Schools Innovations Commission, computer and peripheral companies - LWT, Optima, Electroboard, etc.
- Supporting partnership development between schools.
- Conducting an annual ICT Festival, showcasing exemplary ICT development in schools.
- Membership on the planning committee for our WMR Shared Learnings Program showing innovative use of ICT in schools.

- Membership of professional associations to assist in keeping herself and schools abreast of latest developments. An ability to take information from professional associations to schools, promote programs, conferences, etc.

MENTORING AND LEADERSHIP OF GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS

Since coming into her current position in 2000, Jill's role has evolved and developed from the delivery of using eLearning as a tool to a much stronger emphasis on curriculum and school improvement underpinned by eLearning. Jill's substantial achievements of previous years include individual support to schools, school based PD, implementation and delivery of regional PD and large events such as the Learning Technology Festival that ran annually, facilitated by classroom presenters and attended by hundreds of teachers from across the region.

Jill has demonstrated curriculum leadership skills and is able to draw on wide ranging experiences in organising, initiating, managing, motivating, team building and planning to utilise the wealth of knowledge and skills that she has acquired in a range of educational settings. Jill continues to use these skills to work closely with teachers and school leaders in high level ICT curriculum delivery throughout the region.

Jill has maintained leadership of a regional working party (Dotcom) that acts as a steering committee for ICT leadership throughout the region. Jill met with these people twice per term and the group has been responsible for implementing professional development programs under the regional banner and the establishment of eLearning teacher networks.

Jill has provided individual school support in areas such as planning for eLearning, professional development of staff, direction setting, assisting in applications for the Leading Schools Fund, and has been instrumental in showcasing good ICT practice from schools throughout the region.

As well as providing school support, Jill continually provides support to individual teachers. She has encouraged numerous teachers to present at conferences and submit for awards, assisting them to develop their own leadership skills and often instrumental in assisting them attain promotion positions. She has also used ICT leaders to mentor and support others.

Jill's ability to mentor and lead groups and individuals has included:

- Training key regional personnel on the use of Kahootz software with the aim of skilling them up to promote this through their various networks.
- Identifying, acknowledging and encouraging schools to submit exemplary practice for the Knowledge Bank.
- Providing support to teams writing up their practice for the Knowledge Bank.
- Supporting schools in their application

for the Leading Schools Fund.

_ Leading the Dotcom Working Party in their analysis of The Blueprint and The Victorian Essential Learning Standards.

- Supporting principals and teachers in the effective use of electronic communication.

- Conducting eLearning briefings and providing individual assistance to schools on the development of their eLearning plans and continued eLearning directions for their schools.

SETTING DIRECTIONS AND EXHIBITING LEADERSHIP

During 2004 Jill implemented two new programs with eLearning as a critical element. While the Re@ct Film Festival and the Digital Portfolios PD have required teachers to develop expertise with ICT program and equipment their focus has been soundly based in the curriculum.

The Re@ct Film Festival required teachers and their students to explore the development of a story and how this could be enhanced with the use of film. It looked at techniques that film makers use to convey message and meaning and the project supported schools in developing their skills while doing this. Students and teachers came away from the project with greater understandings about film in general but also explored ways that film could be used to greater advantage in their curriculum delivery. It also showed them increased student engagement through a project such as this.

The Digital Portfolios PD centred on teachers examining their current assessment practices in line with authentic student tasks. Many Early Years teachers immediately saw the value of using sound and video files to capture student performance in a way that they had not tried in the past. When used at parent teacher interviews the parents were immediately able to see the growth in student performance and in many instances it was the students articulating this for their parents with the teachers in the development of a professional portfolio. Jill has created links within the Victorian Institute of Teaching about this program and has supported new graduates in the development of their portfolios to demonstrate VIT requirements.

Some other areas of ICT development that Jill has initiated and maintained in Western Metropolitan Region include:

- The creation of eLearning Awards as part of Literacy & Numeracy Week activities. She has gained sponsorship for two awards in 2005, one of a digital camera prize for a sequence of digital still photos, and a prize of a digital video camera for a two minute documentary about a local sporting identity. Jill intends to continue awards such as these to promote and encourage schools to look at innovative uses of ICT in the curriculum.
- Re@ct Film Festival 2005, 22 schools completed the professional development and film creation project and had their three

minute film screened before an audience of over 450 people.

- Organised Schools' TV coverage for Maths Trail as part of the 2004 Literacy & Numeracy Week activities. In 2005, Jill developed multimedia activities to support students through the Trail of the Elephants at Melbourne Zoo as part of WMR Literacy & Numeracy Week activities.

- Member of 2004 Creativity & Innovation Week planning committee, organised online registration for this event.

- Member of Pedagogy Network planning committee, organised a sharepoint website to house professional reading, links to websites, showcase participants achievements, communication device to support profession conversations between group members.

- Creation of sharepoint intranet sites to support regional office staff, Curriculum and Pedagogy Development Working Party, Early Years statewide group and sites requested by colleagues for their areas of responsibility.

- Learning Technology Networks - establishment of a specific network group to support schools using Macintosh computers.

- Creation of sharepoint intranet site for the Teaching & Learning team to post professional readings, share websites, attach monthly reports and have a space to communicate electronically.

- Zing - committee set up within Dotcom Working Party, establishment of new guidelines and timelines. Availability advertised to all schools - new schools selected from interested schools and support / training mechanisms put into place at no cost to schools.

- DE&T Regional Liaison Officer for eLearning statewide - WMR hosted these meetings in 2004 and 2005. Dissemination of information from Information Technology Division to Dotcom Working Party and through Curriculum Newsletter to all schools.

- PD Initiatives - Re@ct Film Festival, Digital Portfolios Training (sharepoint intranet developed to support this program), Kahootz, Outlook for teachers, Digital Portfolios for Early Years Coordinators, online resources.

- Creation of Consultants PD calendar as a means of coordinating professional development being offered throughout the region.

- Web page - initiated that production of web page by a VET student rather than a commercial company. Liaison for website updates, discussions being held about ways to increase use of website.

- Learning Technology Festival 2000 - 2003. Each year the festival had in excess of 400 participants and multiple focus sites organised across one school week.

- Schools and Trade Expo organised as part of the Learning Technology Festival, another avenue of demonstrating the new and innovative uses of Learning Technology in schools and the broader community.

- Study tours - organised and conducted as PD for the Dotcom Working Party - past tours included the Technology School of the Future in South Australia, New Basics Schools in Queensland and the E-Magine Centre for Online Learning in Tasmania.

In the remaining stages of 2005 and with a view to WMR directions for 2006, Jill is strategically working on ways to assist schools in making sense of where ICT fits within the Victorian Essential Learning Standards and ensuring that they see the place for all teachers to include ICT into their respective programs. Jill is also planning programs that look at the place of ICT in assessment for, assessment of and assessment as learning. She hopes to run an extended program that looks at ICT for Visualising Thinking and draws not only on programs like Inspiration and Mind Mapping but looks at the place of digital still photography, animation, claymation and film making as a way of students showing their knowledge and understanding. Jill also plans on piloting a program on digital storytelling.

Over her years in this role, Jill has spoken and delivered professional development on a variety of topics to local schools, to statewide audiences and at a variety of conferences. Some of these topics have included:

- The place of film in the curriculum
- ICT for Visualising Thinking
- Visual Literacies
- Kahootz
- Multiliteracies
- ICT and Early Years
- Digital Portfolios for teacher and student reflection
- ICT in Numeracy
- ICT in Science
- Microsoft Outlook.

Jill has spoken at the following conferences:

- CeLL Conference, July 2005
- VCAL Conference, April 2005
- Benalla ICT Conference, February 2005
- VITTA Conference, November 2003 & 04
- ICTEV Conference, May 2003 (and various other smaller events)
- Geelong ICT Conference, November 2003
- Young Children & Learning Technologies Conference, Sydney 2003
- VCTA Conference, November 2002
- Business Managers Conference, June 2002
- WMR Middle Years Conference, May 2001.