

# *Reflecting on a Journey*

Rob Clarke is facilitator for the Christchurch ICT Cluster based at Fendalton School.

He attributes his interest in ICT to his time at Teachers' College in Christchurch.

"Early on, (at College) I saw that ICT was going to be very important in education in the future. Based on that I chose to take all the ICT courses I could in my last year and did some in my own time."

Rob began teaching at Murray's Bay School where he designed electronic student reports. The school gave him the support to extend himself.

"I had a brilliant beginning teacher programme and the most amazing tutor teacher who was a leading light for me. I really had the chance to explore thinking skills and ICT in that year", he reflects.

He also attended the Apple '*Teaching and Learning with Technology*' conference and heard speakers like Lane Clark from Canada.

But a move to Tahatai Coast School in the Bay of Plenty gave Rob his biggest injection of professional development and an environment that nurtured his skills.

"Having a laptop (from the school) was one of the major reasons for my progress. We were a great team and were passionate about what we were doing. I flew. I got really involved in databases and planning, using it with kids, using the network, and doing big Hyperstudio projects."

After two years he moved to MagnumMac as an educational PD consultant in Christchurch and, a year and a half later, to Fendalton School to facilitate their ICTPD project.

Now, two years into the project Rob has had time to reflect on what are key ingredients for successful PD.

He believes that teachers need a structured programme but with freedom to experiment.

"There needs to be a balance of 'this is the way we are doing it', with 'go and explore'. I think there is a fine line to walk down here, especially with teachers who can be hesitant and need guidance", he says.

He also has some advice for schools on choosing facilitators and lead teachers.

"Facilitators must be able to build really strong, open relationship with participants, or use other systems such as layers of lead teachers", he says.

Rob says knowing how people are feeling really helps the process.

"Often people are feeling really threatened, and they need to be open and honest about how they are feeling. Then I'm able to help them by looking at ways that make them less threatened or put in other forms of support like lead teacher support."

He sees the role of school-based lead teachers as vital.

"Their job is to promote a model classroom in their school. The other part of their job is to be a communication link between me and the rest of the staff. Because the role of the facilitator sometimes threatens people, the lead teacher's role needs to be supporting

He says lead teachers also need to make teachers aware of professional development opportunities like workshops and conferences.

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