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TEACHERS AND THE USE OF COMPUTERS IN  
FOUR ACT NON-GOVERNMENT PRIMARY SCHOOLS

by

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requirements of the degree of Master of Education

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## ABSTRACT

The case studies carried out in four non-government primary schools in the ACT aimed to look at the way teachers were using computers in classrooms in order to shed light on the factors which may determine how teachers chose to use computers to enhance learning. The case study method allowed the researcher to use triangulation to provide in-depth information about the processes involved in the delivery of a lesson using a computer.

The findings were positive in that more than half of the teachers were found to be using computers at a high level of adoption, predominantly running simulation programs. In most schools, this was in spite of either hardware or software constraints, inadequate professional development opportunities or administrative obstacles. Whether the teachers taught in a laboratory or had one computer in the classroom did not seem to retard their enthusiasm for finding the best strategies to effectively integrate computer use.

Cooperative learning strategies had been adopted by most of the teachers so their transition to computer use was made easier since their students had already been 'routinised'.

The data also pointed to formal Computer Education as a possible determinant of a high level computer user. However, research on a wider scale would be needed to validate the result.

Differences in the way classes were managed in a one-computer classroom and a laboratory were evident. Teachers spent most time with those students working away from the computer in the one-computer classroom and most time with those working at the computer in the laboratory setting. Methods of evaluation were shown to be necessarily different depending on whether work was carried out in a laboratory or a one-computer classroom.

Finally, the study pointed to the need for non-government schools and system managers to begin long-term planning for hardware and software purchase and resource management in order to provide teachers with the tools needed to integrate computer use effectively. Such planning would need to include provision for professional development.

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