

PROFILE



The right tools to educate

From their years of teaching and advising educators across the country, Frangenheim and Ryan decided to share their expertise in the form of the APICTA 2002 award winner, the Xpata Lesson Planner.

As the world around us spins towards changes to more advanced technology and its applications, it is important to prepare the next generation to embrace the changed world and equip them with the right tools to ensure that they can carry on improving the world.

The winner of the Education & Training category of the international Asia Pacific Information & Communications Technology Award (APICTA) 2002 is a system developed by two educators to help equip teachers with a powerful tool in preparing for lessons. The Xpata Lesson Planner is considered one of the most innovative teaching tools ever created and its adoption by over 400 schools in Australia alone since it was made available

in June 2001, has been proven it to be true.

The Xpata Lesson Planner is based on the Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory as well as the Benjamin Bloom's Taxonomy of the Cognitive Domain. What makes this application so unique is its

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availability online. Access is 24/7 and it allows for collaboration by a team of teachers. With its online presence it means that no matter where one teacher may be, he can still assist in lesson planning regardless of the time zone he is in.

Putting experience to good use

The people behind the Xpata Lesson Planner are Eric Frangenheim and Tony Ryan. Both of them have years of hands-on experience in dealing with school systems and students having been teachers themselves. They are no strangers to the classroom setting and often show off their skills and the Xpata Lesson Planner to the teachers as well as the students.

In 1999, they founded E-Learning Australia Pty Ltd and with financial assistance from the Information Industries Board of the Queensland Department of State Education, Version 1 of the Xpata Lesson Planner was soon developed. Sales of the Xpata Lesson Planner started in June 2001, and with the support of Education Queensland to help with the

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An innovative teaching tool

The Xpata Lesson Planner has led to the development of an eight-week Technology Curriculum and Pedagogy course that is based completely on the Xpata Lesson Planner. This course

rides on the latest technology from IBM to run online.

Education Queensland, which controls the Xpata Lesson Planner in Queensland, monitors every lesson and class to ensure that all school activity in the state is run systematically according to the set guidelines.

The Xpata Lesson Planner is certainly a welcomed innovation in the systematic implementation of a standard education system in any country. It eliminates the need for state or government education officials to traipse round the country to ensure the set guidelines are being followed since with the Xpata Lesson Planner, teachers can collaborate and share their experiences online.

Teachers across the country can work together to create lesson plans that work and put them into practice. They can also share their successes with

the lesson plans they have tried out and discuss the problems they encountered and improve upon the lesson plans in the Xpata Lesson Planner. From this sort of online discussion, which will get input from teachers with varied experiences teaching in diverse environments, the teachers will gain experiences without actually having to go through it themselves.

This is particularly useful for new teachers just starting out on their careers. The Xpata Lesson Planner promotes a mentoring system among the teachers, where the new can gain from the experienced teachers and at the same time, provide fresh ideas. This system can be used throughout the country and does not limit the practice of mentoring to the same district, school or location. Physical meetings can be reduced to a minimum and allow the teachers to concentrate fully on developing proper lesson plans.

Apart from helping to educate the next generation of Australians, Ryan and Frangenheim are offering their workshops to the people in the government sector as well as business groups. It is hoped that the Xpata Lesson Planner will soon be used in the corporate sector and work its magic like its current successes in the schools.

The Xpata Lesson Planner definitely deserves the Asia Pacific Award for Education & Training as it is a working system that has changed the way education is executed around the country. ●



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