

Technology here for better or worse

EDITORIAL

By **RUBY McNAMARA**
and **JASMINE HAMMOND**

TECHNOLOGY is changing education at all levels and provides improved opportunities for students. Our classrooms are significantly different to the days of blackboards and fountain pens. Throughout recent decades technology has increasingly shaped and re-shaped our learning experiences.

From replacing blackboards with interactive whiteboards, or the addition of computers and tablets, to learning solely from books, technology has changed the way we learn.

But is it necessarily a good thing?

Do you remember the days when the teacher lost the chalk for the blackboard and couldn't write a thing down?

All you have to do now is use your finger on the new interactive whiteboards.

At Kotara South Public School, technology helps all children with their education.

All classes from kindergarten to year 6 have access to technology.

In the Hearing Support Unit, students have iPads to help with communication and interactive whiteboards help students see

what they're learning visually in ways not possible with the limitations of a blackboard.

Clicking on Google is a great way to find information quickly.

Research projects are fun, simple and easy with all the information at hand.

Of course, teachers have to plan carefully and monitor what students are doing when using computers or tablets.

They need to ensure students aren't just playing or accessing inappropriate sites.

School technology systems are set up to block sites that don't have an educational purpose.

Issues such as cyberbullying and viruses can be easily managed. Many schools teach the importance of cyber safety and how to control viruses by using programs such as Buddie, Cyber Quolls and Stay Safe Online.

Learning possibilities through proper use of the internet greatly outweighs the disadvantages.

Technology is changing student learning for the better because it can help all children to express themselves and present information in a way that suits them.

The internet allows an easy and quick way to conduct research.

Most students and teachers believe it has added to classroom efficiency and improved student engagement.

While we can't stop the progress of technology, we can make sure it is used for the better.



IPADS: Modern technology in action.

Picture: Hudson Green

Connecting in the classroom

By **ELLA CANNON**
and **ELLIE PRICE**

TECHNOLOGY is constantly changing so it is important for schools to keep up with innovative ways to educate. From interactive whiteboards to laptops, tablets and eReaders, teaching methods are quickly advancing to keep up with the 21st century child.

In 2012, staff at Kotara South Public School came to the decision to purchase 20 iPad minis. This decision was made so that every student would have the opportunity to use iPads during class literacy and maths groups or as a research tool during history and science lessons.

There were discussions about which apps would be educational and appropriate for all ages to get the most out of modern technology.

Oscar Shearman in year 6 is very excited about the iPads being used during class time. "I think the students will learn more through technology and they will enjoy learning more," he said.

It is expected students will use the iPads to develop multimedia projects including taking and editing photos and film.

Assistant principal Catherine Ward describes iPads as a modern way of teaching and learning. "I think it will enhance the learning outcomes for all students from kindergarten to year 6," she said.

Celebrating 15 years of Starstruck

By **CASSIDY NANCARROW**
and **LANA KEITEL**

STARSTRUCK is a variety concert that showcases excellence in performing arts and public education throughout the Hunter Region.

Each year, students have the opportunity to work with industry professionals to develop their skills in a chosen field and then perform on stage.

Student participation in Starstruck has been a tradition at Kotara South Public School for 15 years since starting in 1997.

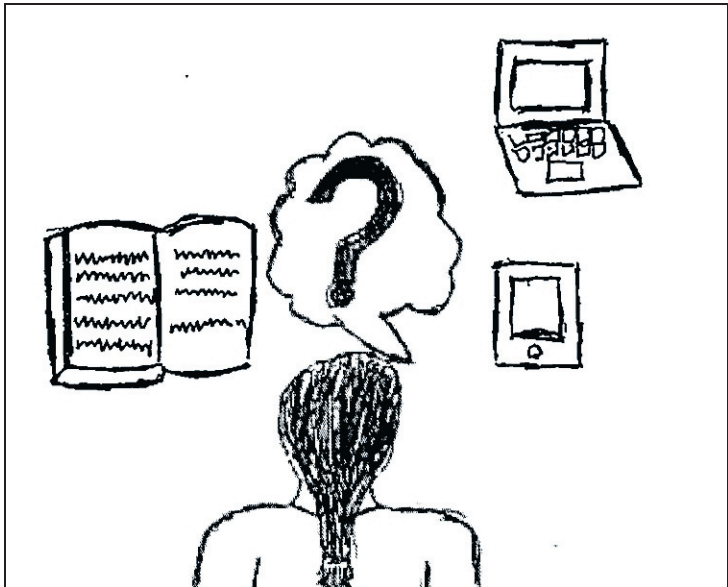
All year 5 students are given the opportunity to audition with the top 16 eventually given the chance to perform.

"The tradition of Starstruck at our school has been a fabulous experience for all year 5s," said Starstruck co-ordinator Tracey Godden.

Starstruck is not only for students and teachers. It has provided parents and members of the school community with a wonderful chance to be involved in the school beyond just helping out in a classroom.

Parents are often required to make costumes as well as supervise and transport children to and from the concerts.

This year students are already preparing for the big event. Starstruck helps students build confidence and gives them opportunities to make new friends and have lots of fun.



Cartoon: William Chapman

Sporty students shine at selection trials

By **CODY MORGAN**

KOTARA South Public School year 5 students Will McKinley and Ellie Price have been selected for the Newcastle zone rugby league and netball carnivals.

Both were chosen from a strong field of contenders and look forward to participating at the gala days.

Ellie and Will were surprised and happy with their selection.

"I was very happy as there were lots of good players," said Will.

Ellie has been playing for five years and loves every season with the Kotara Netball Club. Her team made it through to the semi-finals last season.

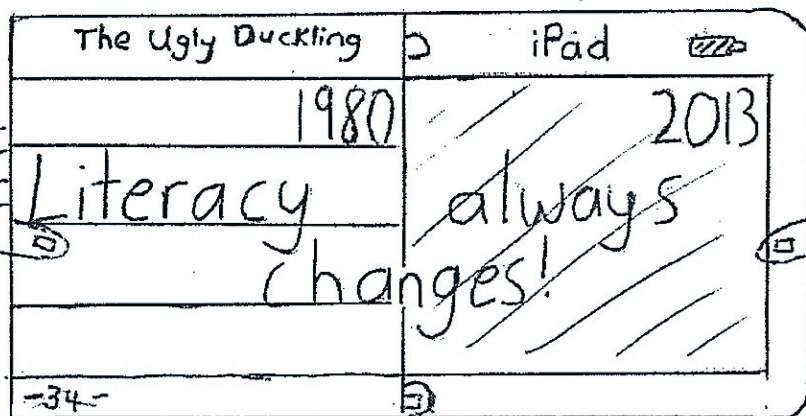
"The selection was pretty nerve-racking and there was lots of talent. I wasn't really expecting to make the team but I was determined to do my best and have fun.

"I'd love to be a professional netball player but realise it's important to take every opportunity that comes my way in and out of school."



TARGETED: Zone representatives Ellie Price and Will McKinley.
Picture: Ruby McNamara

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