



Success story

NEO 2 customer profile:

Tricia Lockhart, Freelance trainer and tutor

Having taught in different types of school - including selective, single sex, mixed and comprehensive - in several counties, Tricia Lockhart has experienced many aspects of teaching as a form tutor, Year co-ordinator, ICT co-ordinator and Head of a large department. *"I also spent 18 months on an exciting secondment supporting 500 schools - primary and secondary - in five counties,"* she adds.

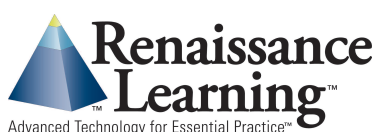
Tricia Lockhart is now a freelance tutor and trainer specialising in ICT, in particular teaching GCSE and A-level Maths and ICT, as well as SEN-enriched learning with ICT. *"From the teachers and pupils I help, I know what they most like is the fact that I try to marry my knowledge with what they want to achieve. I listen to their needs rather than try to impose a task, which for them is meaningless. They all hate to waste time - it is an insult to adults and children alike to ask them to invest hours of time unproductively."*

She has been working with Renaissance Learning products for a number of years, and is a great believer in their ability to unlock the potential in pupils that are struggling, or may even have been written off altogether.

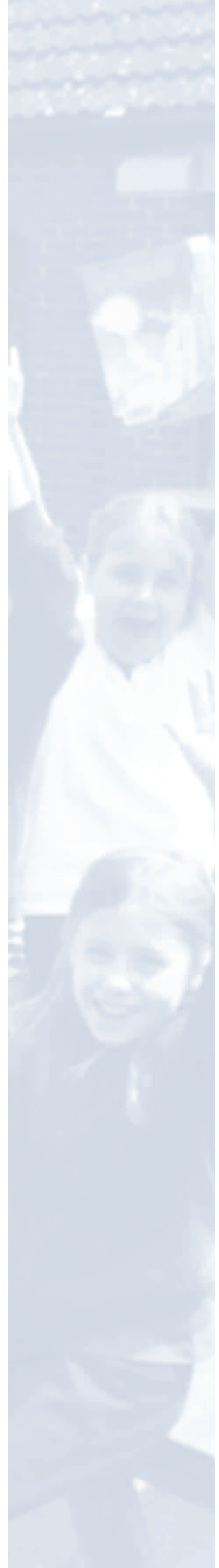
During her time at selective girls school Wycombe High, Tricia recalls how an unhappy Year 10 pupil with a behaviour/attainment problem, who had not been performing as well as expected, was one of the first to be given a NEO 2. Whilst she had been shown to have an IQ of 154 - the highest in the school at the time - the girl's homework was not being completed, as Tricia explains: *"It seemed that she was not always aware it had been set, let alone understand what was required."* The 'NEO solution' had already been implemented before Tricia arrived at the school, but was already having a positive effect on the girl's attainment, confidence and attitude.

Tricia admits that she was probably quite prejudiced toward the NEO 2 initially, taking the view that a traditional laptop would be more useful. *"My discussion with the pupils convinced me to the contrary. The light weight, robustness and long*

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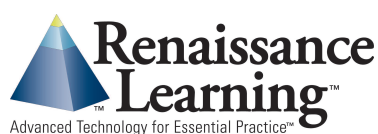
Tricia Lockhart, Freelance trainer and tutor: *continued...*

battery life were just some of the reasons why the NEO 2's were such a good solution." She continues: "Another powerful reason was the fact pupils could save a file for each lesson, and at the end of the day print them out so that they mentally revised each topic." Tricia was also impressed by the simplicity of the NEO 2, which starts up and shuts down instantly at the touch of a button - thereby ensuring no lesson time is wasted. A long battery life meant the lack of power outlets or battery charge was practically never a problem for either the teachers or pupils. "The life of a NEO 2 must approach 3 or 4 times a normal machine," adds Tricia. The ability to store work for 'lesson one' in 'file one' meant pupils simply had to glance at their timetable to match lessons and subjects, ensuring notes were always filed in the correct place. As Tricia observed: "Homework written at the end of the file, rather than in the Planner that other pupils used, was effective because there was no need to move from or around the NEO 2, or to locate the correct day and date in the Planner. This allowed the pupils to gain those few minutes that made the difference in them noting down their homework, rather than having insufficient time to finish taking down the details."

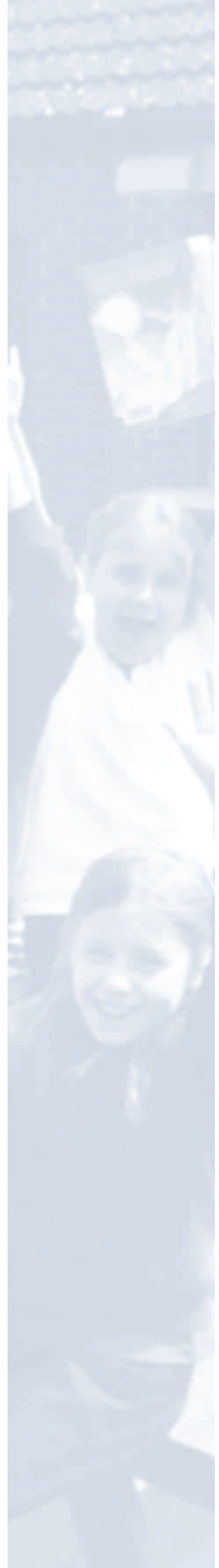
Tricia recalls one of the most emotive moments during her time at Wycombe High School was when the Year 10 pupils mentioned above agreed to give a short talk to the next group to be offered NEO 2's. "By now her continued, increased confidence was a joy to behold and she had an excellent relationship with those of us who had helped her - partly because she remembered how awful the pre-NEO 2 days had been." Tricia continues: "She had no resentment that it had taken some years for the solution to be implemented. When she said with such humble, innocent earnestness that the NEO 2 had 'allowed me to take part and understand lessons just as others did', and 'make note of the homework instead of not even realising it had been set because I was trying to catch up', I had to turn to the wall and wipe away a tear."

Determined to build on the initial success of the NEO 2, Tricia remembered that

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Tricia Lockhart, Freelance trainer and tutor: *continued...*

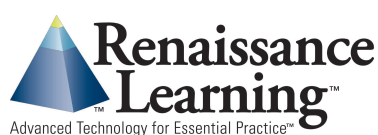
the SENCO had been looking at ways of ensuring pupils could print more easily when she first arrived. As a result, she made sure the school has iR capable printers that allowed pupils from anywhere in the various buildings to quickly get a print out. *"In the early days, often teachers would ask for note books to be handed in at the end of the lesson, forgetting that NEO 2 pupils needed to print, so effectively giving them an extra task,"* says Tricia.

She was also keen to encourage dialogue and a sense of 'community' amongst all NEO 2 users across the school. *"We had one or two opportunities to allow the NEO 2 pupils across different years to get together and exploit the tools available by sharing ideas. We allocated an area of the school's VLE highlighting the resources. The basic information was visible to everyone, and those who were members of that group - and their parents/carers/support staff - could communicate with each other."*

For her part, Tricia listed carefully to the needs of NEO 2 users in order to identify and eliminate any hurdles within the school environment. *"Many SEN pupils need extra time to complete tasks, so it is important to reduce anything that is not streamlined. For exams, we tried to ensure that the pupils were allowed to use the NEO 2's where possible. It was ironic that at least one board refused to allow the girl with the IQ of 154 to use the NEO 2 as by now she could cope as well as any average student without it!"*

Whilst the value of using the NEO 2 with SEN pupils was beyond question, Tricia was equally keen to prove their worth throughout the rest of the school. *"We also had several small sets of NEO 2's available in various subject areas and ICT suites, which is particularly useful as they count in the school's computer to pupil ratio."* She adds: *"Appreciation of NEO 2's benefits had impressed me - we did not want the machines to be seen as a tool just for SEN pupils. For many pupils, keying in information is the most time-consuming part of using ICT, but with the NEO 2 this can*

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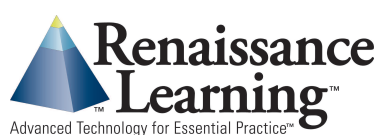
Tricia Lockhart, Freelance trainer and tutor: *continued...*

be done outside, on a field trip, when there is a power cut - in so many situations." She was also careful not to exclude the teaching staff: "At INSET sessions we begged a few minutes to make sure the teachers knew the sets of NEO 2's were available for them to use, as well as explaining how they could make life easier for the SEN pupils who already used NEO 2's."

Tricia noted that the NEO 2's were particularly useful when space and equipment is at a premium. *"In a computer room, where machines may be squeezed around the edge of the room, those who may become distracted can be positioned at a desk in the centre of the room whilst they key-in. Equally, if there are insufficient computers the NEO 2's can be combined with the PCs to ensure every pupil uses one or other effectively - as long as a few minutes are set aside to upload to the pupil's network area."* Tricia also found the NEO 2's particularly useful in situations where a pupil has to be removed from an ICT lesson as it often allows them to complete much of the planned lesson, thereby ensuring that they don't end up behind when they return.

Tricia urges others to make sure that their prejudice doesn't stop them investigating NEO 2 as part of their school's solution, and is proud of the difference it made to her pupils. *"Like most teachers, my greatest learning was from my pupils! Sometimes because they achieved things I thought impossible. In my teaching, I was always interested in the way pupils learned, as well as the end result, and perhaps it - not just the novelty of the computing, but also what they could do for both teachers and pupils - was what fascinated."*

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