

# Programming a touch-sensitive pad

**One group activity for our study of *Storm Boy* was to use the touch-sensitive pad to write a synopsis of the story. However, I soon discovered that creating the overlays made another ideal activity.**

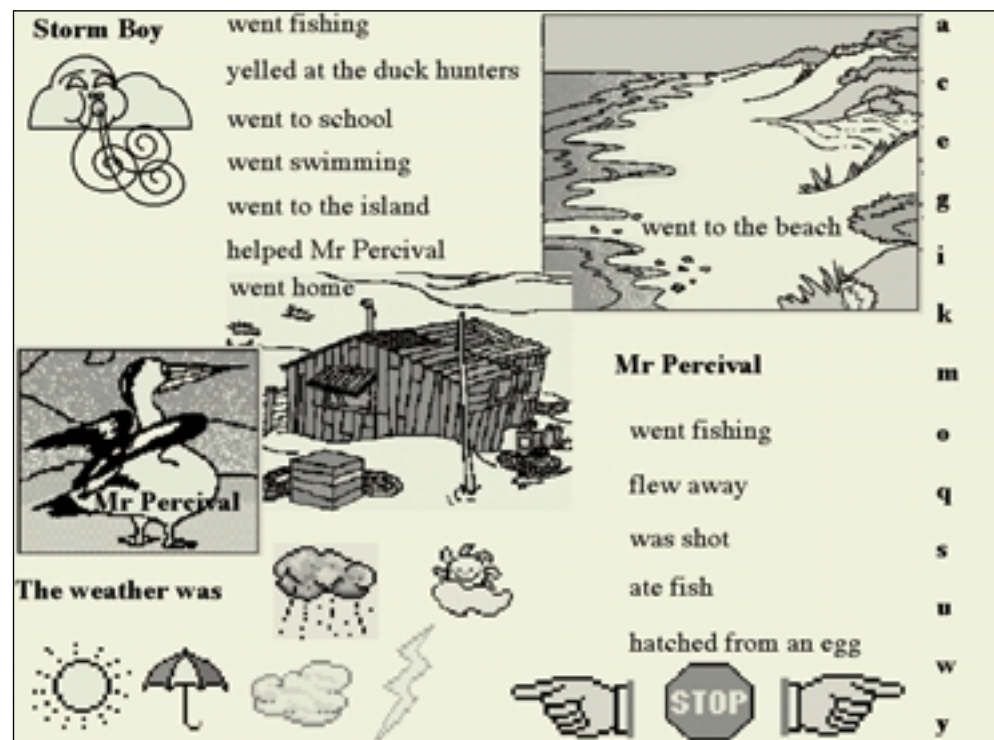
We were studying the story *Storm Boy* by Colin Thiele. I had the students develop a synopsis of the story as one of their group activities. I was making an overlay for our touch-sensitive keyboard when I realised that this was exactly what I should be getting my students to do.

We learnt about the programming aspect of the touch-sensitive pad as a whole class. I demonstrated how to select the cells on the keyboard using the software instructions and then type in the text. After some students had tried the activity, all were willing to have a go.

Programming the keyboard was incorporated as one of the group rotation activities. The students' task was to design an overlay based on *Storm Boy* that could be used to retell the story.

The students relied heavily on graphics for their overlay and used little text. It did, however, provide them with practice on how to program the overlay into the touch-sensitive keyboard. The most important outcome of the task was not the actual overlay that the students produced but the language and cooperative skills they developed coming to a consensus and finding a solution agreeable to all.

The students used their completed overlays to retell the story.



**Overlay produced by students.**

Storm Boy went to the beach. The weather was overcast. The storm was coming. Mr Percival ate fish and then flew away to the island. Lightning flashed and the rain

**Story produced by using the students' overlay in combination with the computer keyboard.**