

SWAMWAC Transition Report

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Part 2: The pilot

Parkland Primary School

Class: Year 6DHT

Rationale

The aim of this Transition Project was to improve children's research skills through the use of different ICT media. Consequently, the additional aim would be to minimise their concerns and worries i.e. the fear factor of moving on to Secondary School.



Context

At first, all Y6 teachers, Y7 link teacher and members of the Transition Steering Group met with members of the Education Resource Library and Media to discuss and gather information with regards to good practice identified within the development of research skills. This was a productive meeting and laid the foundations and enthusiasm for further discussion to plan the joint process and Action Plan.

Once the route map of the project had been agreed, Year 6 staff began to consider how best to address the project and plan for the facilitation of the steps of the process, the classroom organisation required and the identification of the development of Key Skills within the project.

An ideal opportunity for the research at our school to begin arose during the Spring Term when the year-group was naturally organised into two groups and spending time at two different locations but following similar Personal and Social Education Skills: namely those children who had chosen to attend a 7 day residential visit on a farm and those children remaining at Parkland Primary School. This was thought to be an ideal opportunity when the year-group, because of re-organisation and mixing of classes would provide further opportunities to interact as a 'new' group and to plan and organise their thoughts and ideas to develop each project.

The children who were remaining at school would be the 'target group' for the planning and research for this joint pilot. This planning and research would then be shared, developed and extended by the pilot Year 6DHT class on their return.

Both staff and children found the choice of the project attractive because:

- There were opportunities to build upon and extend their present ICT skills. These skills - namely using only digital images and sound to produce a video film- had been learnt and taught during the Autumn Term where children had created their own digital story about a unit of History work.
- There were many opportunities for the children to extend Assessment for Learning strategies with a high priority provided for children working interactively and accepting the responsibility for the interpretation of the information to a specific audience.
- There were numerous and natural valuable opportunities to embed and further develop aspects of all 4 Key Skills: Communication; ICT; Thinking; and some Number.

Implementation

The project was shared with the children and discussion evolved around the practicalities of how to shape the project. The children became naturally involved with determining the planning of the project and hence a 'story board' emerged. This opportunity for sharing of ideas and agreeing the principles of the 'story board' proved important. Important aspects of the end product were clarified:

- what audience was being presented to
- the structure of the 'story mapping'
- the content of the 'story mapping'
- the variety of media to present the information
- the appointment of 'leaders' to edit the information
- the intended time-scale of the video
- the intended outcome of the video story



Story Board

Who is the audience?

- *to share with Y7 at Olchfa Comprehensive school*
- *to place on our school-website and Olchfa School website*

What is the message?

- *Parkland Primary School is a place where people care for each other*
- *Parkland Primary School is unpolluted*
- *Parkland Primary School is a place where people learn*
- *Parkland Primary School is a place where visitors come to school*

How will we present the information?

4 AREAS:

Area 1 : *Learning at Parkland Primary School*

- *Library KS1 and KS2*
- *ICT Suites*
- *Music lessons*
- *Comic strips*

Area 2: Unpolluted

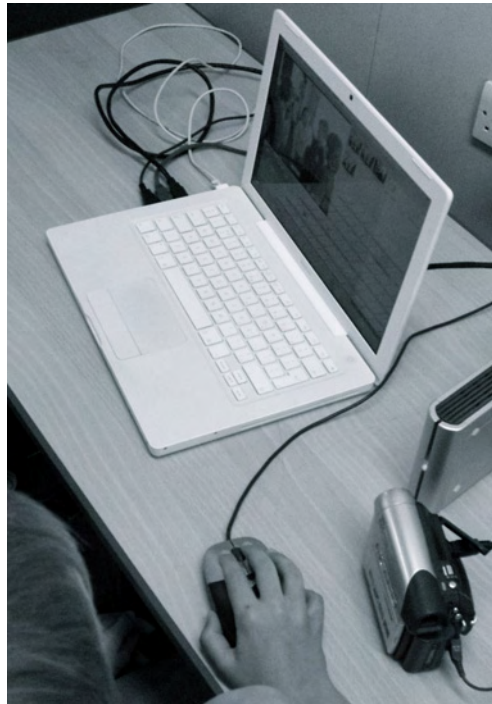
- *Recycling bin*
- *Eco Council work*
- *Photos of field*
- *Children using our bins*

Area 3: Care for each other

- *Parkland Peacemakers*
- *Interviews with KS1 children*
- *Interview Peacemakers*

Area 4: Visitors

- *Warm welcome*
- *St. David's Day*
- *Interview new children*



The children then 'thought showered' each of the chapters. This involved listing ideas and the media which they intended to use to collect and record their research. This process naturally involved making decisions and agreement being arrived at in relation to the 'story board' planning. There were numerous opportunities for asking questions and presenting their arguments and persuasion to support the inclusion of their initial planning ideas.

The children also decided to agree Success Criteria at the start of the project. Their discussion results were:

- *clear sequence*
- *effective information to tell a story*
- *real questions which needed answers*
- *provide enough information*
- *video to be enjoyable to watch*
- *length of video not to be too long*

The result was that a group of children would be involved in the capturing of the video research; and another group of children would capture the digital image research to prepare the necessary resources for the Apple –Mac 'training day' with their Olchfa Comprehensive School teacher, Mr Nick Francis.

Before gathering the final research, the children immediately recognised that they needed to practise using the video camera and set about working with the Teaching Assistant to experiment, practise and rehearse their skills to capture their ideas. Much fun was had by all and during viewing of these first attempts, the children assessed their work and determined their own improvements and success criteria of collecting video footage.

The result was a variety of footage prepared using video and digital camera for their training day.

Another group of children had been investigating the Apple-Mac machines. These children had viewed the 'Comic Life' program. Through discussion about the possibilities of this feature, they decided to probe the program. They visited different classrooms; used the digital camera and recording features of the machine; captured small aspects of different learning taking place across the school to present in the shape of a comic strip. Through this idea they investigated the possibilities of recording sound. They were eager to include this added feature within the project and this was one of the questions to solve during our training day.

Training Day

The planned visit and collaborative learning during the visit of our partner Secondary School teacher, Mr Nick Francis, was extremely beneficial and crucial to the success of the project. The identified 'leader' groups from both classes and staff and our ICT Co-ordinator, were able to be involved during each session.

Having planned and gathered the research material, the children were eager to receive the technical steps of the program and were extremely enthusiastic not only to apply their present ICT skills but also to challenge and develop these skills in order to present their ideas in the most effective way possible.

The ICT skills shared and rehearsed during the day were numerous but the main skills were:

- downloading images from digital camera
- enhance the images
- transferring video research
- editing video information
- cropping video images to required footage length
- inputting transitions
- choosing from the music menu to add background music
- recording live music to support visual images

The children had quality time to practise, rehearse and question the procedures until their confidence and ability to work independently had grown.

This knowledge and understanding of the program was essential to the next step of the project where the children would be encouraged to work independently to edit and prepare the presentation of their ideas to the specific audience of Y7 children.

The children's evaluation of this training day is interesting. Many of the children

'wished the morning could have been longer...it was lunch-time too soon!'

'It's great fun!.....just like being a real film editor!'

However, there were wider evaluations as well with one child stating:

'It was great working with Mr Francis because we will now know him when we go to Olchfa in September.'

When asked to evaluate improvements on their training session, the children's unanimous response was a wish for the session to be repeated and/or developed. As primary school teachers, we felt that the practice of working together and combining ideas and good practice does not only benefit the children but also the teachers who gain first –hand insight into the development of the learning opportunities across Y6 and Y7.

Implementation of training

From this introductory morning, the children were eager to investigate and probe further the boundaries of the software.

The 'leaders' of the group now set about cascading the skills they had acquired during the training session to the rest of the class. They organised their teams and took responsibility to ensure that the members of their teams had the opportunity to share, practise and rehearse the necessary skills to develop the structure and content of the 'story map'.



During this process children were: applying the skills of communication; asking questions; providing relevant answers; making decisions collaboratively; and problem solving of which ICT skills would be required to enable the ideas to be put into practice.

Perhaps it was the opportunities of problem solving and investigational skills which proved to be of the most importance at this stage of the project. These opportunities arose naturally through the opportunity for children to take responsibility for the outcome and planning of their ideas. All of the group had been challenged by their own initiatives and ideas to present the footage in as interesting way as possible. The children had given a lot of thought to the effectiveness of how to present the information. As a result, their collaborative working in the project has increased their confidence and ability.

There were many occasions where they showed resilience. They were undaunted by the 'blips' and accepted and amended each other's ideas to explore, experiment and rectify 'blips' with the self acquired and shared increased knowledge and understanding.

Perhaps the most difficult part of the success criteria was the time limit of the video. The children found it difficult to stop improving and adding to their ideas!

Meeting with Y7

The children were eager to meet together with our link Y7 class and were eager to view the video which Y7 would be presenting to them. They had drawn up many more questions in addition to the questions on the Y6 video and had already received first hand 'Question Time' with a small group of Parkland Y7 children prior to meeting their link class.

The questions raised were :

- *Do the Year 13 help you to find your way around Olchfa School in the first few days?*
- *Are there buddies for Y7 as we are buddies for our infants?*
- *How different is Y7 Maths to Y6 Maths?*
- *Do you have to carry your bag with you all day?*
- *Do you have to wear black shoes?*
- *Is there 'Golden Time?'*
- *Are teachers strict?*
- *Do you have to wear tie/shirt every day?*
- *How much homework is there?*
- *What is SMART class?*
- *Are musical instrument lessons at playtime or lesson time?*
- *What new languages are learnt?*
- *Are people friendly?*
- *Do many people get lost in the one-way system in the first week? What happens?*

As the children watched the Y7 video, they were eager to find answers to their concerns. The Y7 had presented the information in 5 focused areas in relation to the Y6 questions. The Y6 children watched intently and soon there was a natural interaction and qualification of the information in the form of a 'question and answer' session following each section.

This question and answer opportunity was essential to be impromptu and immediate. The essential factor was the meeting of the two classes which consequently facilitated further dialogue and subsidiary questions to be raised.

When evaluating this meeting of the two classes and staff, there was overwhelming agreement of the value not only of sharing this information but of the high value of the presentations and the airing of concerns giving

- deeper insight into the Y6 concerns of Transition
- minimisation and reduction of rumours and false information by older children and siblings

As a teacher observer of the reactions of my Y6 class, the high importance and benefits of these joint presentations and meetings cannot be over-stated.

The Y7 video presentation had also applied their knowledge and empathy to present additional information which would support the practicalities of the first few weeks settling in with new friends at a new school.

Conclusion

This pilot project has been an exciting and demanding 'real' project. It has challenged and developed the skills of our Y6 children and myself. I believe that our children have benefited from this experience not only with the extension of technical ICT skills but also with developing life-long skills of Communication and Thinking.

Personally, I believe that this project has been an effective way of airing our children's concerns in Primary School about the Transition process.

One of the most important aspects has been their realisation that they are worried about similar concerns and that by talking about these concerns, we can work together to make the Transition process as effective, smooth and enjoyable as possible. It has also provided immeasurable insight to the minor and major concerns of our children which is enabling our teachers to strive together to improve the Transition process for our children.

In addition, I am assured by our Parkland Primary School children that when they become our future 'Steven Speilbergs,' we will all be invited to the premier viewing!

Mair Lewis

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