

Using ICT in the Foundation Stage Nottinghamshire LA – project overview

Using video to support the observation,
assessment and documentation of
learning

Rationale

The project explored the use of digital video in the form of NISIS digital video cameras and video baby monitors to support improvements in pupils' personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy. Five settings, three maintained (a primary, infant and nursery school) and two PVI (an independent school and a private day nursery) were invited to participate in the project.

The following questions were asked.

- How can video be used to support the documentation of learning?
- Is it possible to use video to observe children's interactions when an adult is not present?
- Is video an efficient way of documenting learning?
- Would the technology impact on children's learning and if so in what ways?
- Was an e-portfolio a viable proposition for Foundation Stage children?

Process

Settings were selected where we felt the project would have most impact, where practitioners were reasonably confident in the use of ICT and where there was evidence of good Foundation Stage practice. In one of the maintained schools the practitioner was an AST.

Equipment

- Digital video camera with 256MB memory card.
- Video baby monitor.
- Combined TV/video recorder.

Training and support

The settings were invited to attend the following events.

- Launch – outline of project, documentation of learning, assessed skills.
- Training Day 1 – use of DV camera, Windows Movie Maker, file management, creation of e-portfolios.
- Training Day 2 – feedback, use of baby monitors, assessment for learning.
- Training Day 3 – feedback, completion of report and case studies, reassessed skills.

Each setting was allocated the equivalent of one day's consultant support. This time was used to support settings with technical issues, observation of activities and for gathering information for case studies.

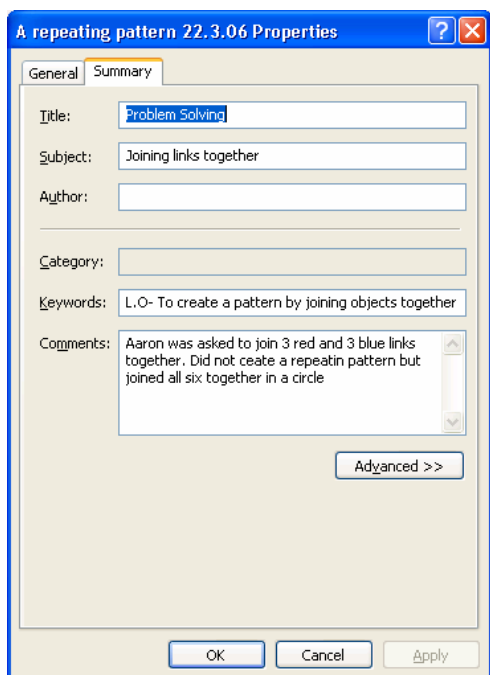
Staff were given an additional day of supply cover to work on the activities in school.

Email and telephone support was available throughout.

Activities undertaken in the settings

Each setting was asked to:

- use the video to support their observations, assessments and documentation of learning particularly in relation to CLL and PSED
- establish e-portfolios for at least six children
- explore the use of the baby monitors to observe and assess child initiated activities.



Emerging questions

- How can we make the data meaningful?
- Who is the information for?
- How can we use the data to support transition?
- What will happen to the e-portfolios as the children progress through school?

There were concerns about the information gathered and how this related to Foundation Stage profile. One teacher thought this could be addressed through producing PowerPoint where video and photographs could be collated and linked to areas of learning (see case study two). In another setting more detailed information about how the evidence linked to the Foundation Stage profile was stored in the summary section within the file's properties.

Initially the AST was not sure of the value of an e-portfolio for every child and started with group folders. Within a few days she realised that it would be valuable to have folders for individual children. Videos of group activities were copied into each member of the group's individual folder. These folders, e-portfolios, were then used to demonstrate children's achievements to parents.

Issues

- Time to become familiar with the kit and software was necessary but was limited due to timeline of project.
- Sound quality of equipment used was poor particularly when used for observations of child initiated activities.
- Training for staff who didn't attend project training, particularly in nursery settings.
- Access to computers dedicated for administration purposes particularly for teaching assistants and staff in PVI settings.

Reflections

'It was not necessary to introduce staff to the video software – the focus of this part of the training should have been on the skill of taking short clips. Many of the initial technical problems were associated with this software.'

'At the first training session we should have given some consideration to how the clips were labeled to make them more meaningful.'

Practices

The project has so far been conducted over a period of eight school weeks; we plan to continue developing the project through work with the selected settings and others. Given the short timescale we feel that within our selected settings the project has had significant impact on the following.

- Increased confidence in staff using digital still and video images in a structured folder system to support the documentation of learning.
- Development of ICT skills making teachers more efficient.
- An increased emphasis on the importance of the need to record the process of learning.
- Improved speaking and listening.
- Motivation, particularly for boys who wanted to become involved in activities when ICT kit was being used.
- Children's active involvement in self-assessment.
- Increased confidence in children.
- Observation of SEN, particular example elective mute.
- Links with parents in sharing process of learning.

Possibilities

In continuing the project we plan to carry out the following.

- Disseminate through ICT in FS Conference.
- Review the project at end of academic year.
- Review at end of autumn term and attempt to answer some of the emerging questions.
- Work with Early Years Childcare Development Partnership to develop programme of dissemination.
- Work with Children's Centres.
- Address issues of sound quality.
- How can information be linked to e profile? E-portfolio and e-profile.
- Use baby monitors for two way communication.
- Explore use of e-portfolios for supporting transition between Foundation Year 1 to Primary Year 1 for continuity and progression in use of assessment.