

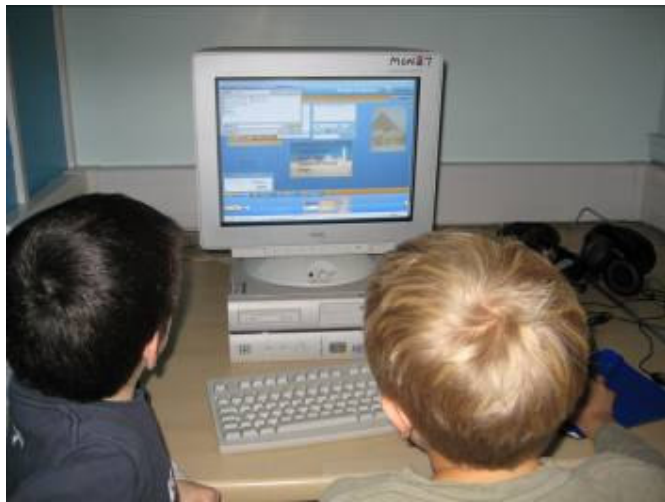
Ancient Egyptian Blogging

Introduction

At Milverton Primary School in Leamington Spa, a Y3/4 class used Honeycomb in History lessons to record and share their learning.

School

Milverton is a larger than average primary school. Children join the school with attainment that is broadly in line with the levels expected for their age. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals or with learning difficulties or disabilities is below average. The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds, although a number of other ethnic groups are represented in the school. There are no pupils at the early stages of learning English.



The school provides a good curriculum that is enhanced, in the words of one pupil, by 'loads of clubs'. The many exciting activities provided for the pupils contribute well to their good personal development. Pupils arrive at school excited about the day ahead, knowing that school is going to be interesting. They really enjoy school because of the 'fun way that everything is done'. Pupils' attendance and their behaviour in lessons and around school are good. Staff have high expectations with regards to pupils' academic performance and behaviour but pupils are also encouraged to become confident, well-rounded and mature individuals. With above average basic skills, good levels of independence and plenty of experience of teamwork, pupils are well prepared for their futures. (OFSTED March 2007)



Creative, safe, online tools for the classroom
www.honeycombttools.com



Create • Collaborate • Share • Online

Pupils

All of the children in the Y3/4 class participated, working in mixed age, mixed ability pairs. The class included a range of abilities and one child with EAL.

Teacher

Caroline Tribe, the teacher of class 3/4T, has been at the school since September 2007. Last year, at her previous school, she was part of *Doing Things Differently*, a national conference with creative learning. The Creative Adviser in Warwickshire, Miles Tandy, put Caroline's name forward for trialling Honeycomb. She thinks this is "because he knew I liked different ways of approaching learning and am very much up for trying new things to get children creatively involved in their learning." Caroline describes herself as confident with ICT.

During the pilot project, she has been supported by Vivien Bailey, an E-Learning Adviser from Warwickshire LA, but she planned and delivered all of the sessions herself.

Why they were keen

Caroline's background demonstrates an eagerness to try new things that will support learning and she obviously saw potential in Honeycomb to agree to try it! She didn't see using Honeycomb as extra work, rather as another way of doing what she was already doing with a hope that the children would be enthused about learning with ICT.

"I hoped and still hope that it'll be something that the children can use independently as well as in the classroom, that they'll be able to view other children's work from different schools..." Caroline Tribe

What they did

"We've been working for our Ancient Egyptian project because in school we're learning about Ancient Egypt." Y3 Pupil

The class was already half way through their topic of Ancient Egypt when they began to use Honeycomb. Caroline tweaked the planning to incorporate Honeycomb and negotiated some additional time in the ICT suite. The children had tasks modelled for them on the IWB and then worked in their pairs to complete their work. The children could decide the layout

of their pages and what text or pictures from the shared area to include. For some lessons, the children planned their work in the classroom before getting into the ICT suite in order to ensure that time at the computers was focused. As Honeycomb would be mainly used during the ICT lessons, ICT objectives were also going to be targeted through the work.



Week 1 – Homepage - Logging on in ICT pairs and setting up Homepage. Uploading pictures from shared area.

Week 2 – Blog entry - Discovering the tomb of Tutankhamen diary entry. Diary written in the History lesson and then written up in Honeycomb. Pictures uploaded.

Week 3 – Blog entry – Home Learning. Children added their own blog entry about how pyramids were built.

Week 4 – Blog entry – The Blog of the Dead. Uploading videos of drama (completed in previous half term) and more pictures. Copying prayers written in first half of History unit.

Week 5 – Stickers – Reading and evaluating work.

Caroline also set up a class blog where pairs of children regularly added their thoughts about Honeycomb and suggestions for its improvement. After the lesson in Week 5, the class used this area to write comments about each other's work.

When they did it

On a Monday afternoon, the children had their History lesson and also sometimes had access to the ICT suite for part of the afternoon. Then on a Wednesday afternoon, the class had their 40 minute ICT lesson and this was when their learning was transferred to Honeycomb.

Work contributing to this project was also completed in other settings i.e. the children used digital blue cameras in drama to record *The Weighing of the Heart Ceremony* which was saved to the shared area, converted into a .flv file by Vivien and uploaded by the children to Honeycomb.

The children were also asked to work on Honeycomb as part of their home learning task. For children without internet access at home, Caroline made sure that the ICT suite was available at lunch times so that they could still complete their work.

Impact and benefits

"It's exciting, it's interesting, they're getting to collaborate... I can't think of any negatives. They're all desperate to use it!" Caroline Tribe

The security of the site meant that Caroline had no concerns over e-safety and because she had carefully modelled how to evaluate the work of others and add stickers, the children were sensible when looking at each other's work.

Caroline really enjoyed being able to link home and school and felt that Honeycomb had the potential to greatly enhance the home-school relationship and communication between teachers and parents.

"It definitely has empowered parents to see what their child is doing within the classroom."
Caroline Tribe

"My son... has been very enthusiastic about doing homework on the website and has logged on every day on coming home from school to show us the work he has done and to "play" with his website." Parent

In order for this opportunity to really be exploited, Caroline feels that the ability to add comments is necessary.

Caroline sees a future benefit as being able to communicate across a network of schools. The children certainly enjoyed looking at their friends' work from within the class so there is huge scope for the children to look at what other schools are doing about Ancient Egypt and to actually learn from the work of others.

Learning

The children's ICT objectives involved combining text and graphics so using Honeycomb has fulfilled these. Their general ICT skills were already good before they started using Honeycomb but Caroline feels that they have had such a lot of practice now at formatting text, uploading documents and adding multi-media to their pages that their ICT skills have inevitably improved. Honeycomb



has provided differentiation opportunities with some of the children attempting more complex tasks like adding hyperlinks to their work.

Caroline feels that using Honeycomb has supported the children's learning about Ancient Egypt. The added interest of learning on the computer heightened the children's enjoyment of the topic and increased the enthusiasm for continuing to learn beyond the classroom as many of the children looked at and added to their Honeycomb pages from home, even before the home learning task.

Any partner work supports the ongoing learning of social skills but working with Honeycomb has also enabled the children to improve their ability to collaborate with someone else on the same piece of work.

"Me and my classmate worked as a team to get all the facts on there." Y4 Pupil

Vivien was impressed by how carefully the children thought about the layout of their pages and the decisions they made about font size and colour. Some of the pairs have shown an acute awareness of their audience by including questions and advice on their pages.

"We are often asking children to write for an audience, well what better way of getting a sense of audience than to publish your work online!?" Vivien Bailey (ICTDS)

Top Tip!

"Plan it alongside something that you're already doing rather than a standalone... it's nice if it coincides with what you're doing in the classroom." Caroline Tribe



Creative, safe, online tools for the classroom
www.honeycombttools.com



Create • Collaborate • Share • Online