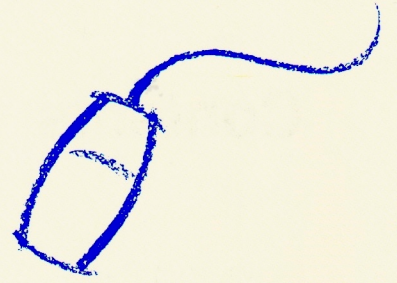


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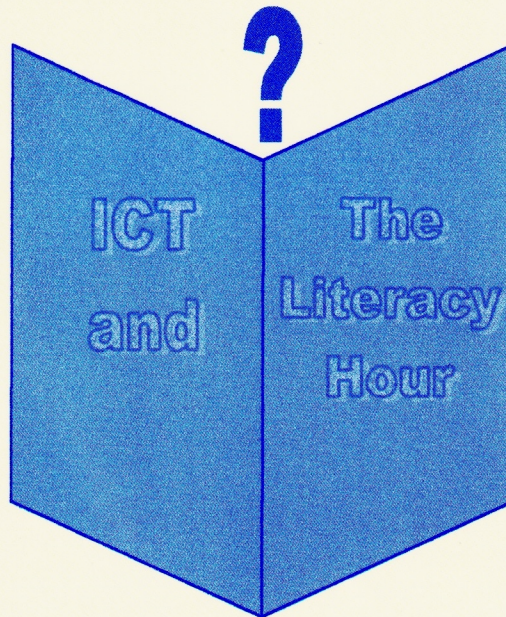
► Summer 2000

Rhyme - Rime

Digraph - Blend

Elegy - Eulogy

Homograph
Homophone
Homonym



Calligram
Concrete poems
Shape poetry

Grapheme - Morpheme

Haiku - Rap
Renga - Tanka

Prefix - Suffix

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MAPE

Magazine Issue 3

News from Becta

Maths Challenge

A national competition to help children develop mathematics skills by setting up and running a virtual Grand Prix racing car, was launched recently with Jaguar Racing driver Johnny Herbert at Silverstone.

The Grand Prix On-line Maths Challenge is aimed at primary children. The competition is being run by the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (Becta), to support the Government's Maths Year 2000 initiative, and is sponsored by Jaguar.

The aim is to encourage the use of ICT in primary schools to support the teaching and learning of maths. All a school needs to do is download the free competition software from the Becta web site at:

mathschallenge.ngfl.becta.org.uk

Children will work in teams of four, using their maths skills to plan and set up a virtual Grand Prix car. Teams have to calculate the fuel requirements, pit stop timings and maximum safe speeds, for their virtual car to race on a given circuit.

The competition software has been adapted from a version of *Maths in Motion* by Cambridgeshire Software House.

Between July and September schools can enter their best team into on-line regional heats which will be held in October. The winners from the regional heats will go forward to the Grand Prix On-line Maths Challenge VIP final, which will be hosted by Jaguar in November 2000.

The challenge champions will win a day out at a Jaguar Racing event in 2001 and top of the range computer equipment for their school. There will be further prizes for runners up and all finalists.

ICT in Practice Awards

MAPE members are invited to nominate teachers in the ICT in Practice Awards before the closing date of Friday 28th July. The Awards are designed to

promote and reward exemplary ICT practice amongst teachers, lecturers, trainers and advisers, and to discover practice that can be widely emulated.

Each award winner will receive £2500 with an additional £2500 going to the school or organisation. The five categories are:

- School Management (Primary and Secondary)
- Special Educational Needs (Primary and Secondary)
- Subject Teaching (Primary and Secondary)
- Advice and Support
- Widening Participation in Further Education

Nomination process

From May 2000, only one nominator is now required for all five categories.

- For the *School Management Award*, the nominator can be either an external professional such as an LEA adviser or representative of professional association, or a chair of governors.
- For the *Special Educational Needs* and *Subject Teaching Awards*, the nominator can be either the headteacher/representative of a governing body or an external professional such as an LEA adviser or a representative of professional association.
- For the *Advice and Support Award*, the nominator can be either a headteacher or an ICT co-ordinator who should have received training or support from the nominee.
- For the *Widening Participation in Further Education Award*, the nominator can be a member of the governing body or an appropriate member of the senior management team.

To nominate and to find full details of the ICT in Practice Awards, please go the Becta website at:

<http://www.becta.org.uk/practiceawards/>

- there's a direct link to this from the Becta home page, and will be until the closing date. All nominations need to be made via the Web site only.

A model holiday

Donna Hurford, Ray Potter and Deborah Roberts
St. Martins College, Lancaster

While the World Wide Web may still be relatively new or indeed presently nonexistent in many English primary schools, we would appear to have already reached something of a crossroads. Are we prepared to embrace a future for educational cyberspace where the scene is dominated by a 'big brother' vision of yet more worksheets flooding into schools from central sources or will the original vision of a more liberating, open-ended, problem-solving environment be fulfilled?

There are currently many excellent curriculum resources published on the Web by individual schools like Hill View Junior (<http://www.sunderland.com/hillview/>) and organisations such as Argosphere (<http://www.argosphere.net/>). These act as very useful pointers to teachers and pupils who are relatively new to the Web. However, the purpose of the current project was to explore what might be achieved in a single day given a class of inexperienced, mixed ability Y6 children and the full resources of the Web.

Tutors from St. Martins College worked collaboratively with teachers from Poulton le Sands Primary School in Morecambe to devise an Internet activity day which involved a combination of exploring the World Wide Web, computer modelling and simple desktop publishing. The theme for the day was 'My ideal holiday' and the entire project was completed within 4 hours or a single school day.

Although of course relatively few schools are able to provide a suite of 16 computers in a single room, this project could easily be adapted to suit a wide range of circumstances. Given a fairly typical situation of one or two computers per class it might be reasonably completed over a longer period, perhaps half a term.

Following straightforward preparatory work in school and away from the computer, the pupils arrived at the college for an intensive activity day. The learning outcomes were explicitly stated and made available for pupil reference throughout the day. National curriculum references were not shared with pupils but have been integrated below for lesson planning purposes.

Learning outcomes for all pupils

- I can explore my chosen destination using the WWW and consider the quality of the information available.
ICT L4 Pupils interpret their findings, question plausibility and recognise that poor quality information yields unreliable results.
- I can enter numbers into a spreadsheet and ask 'what if' questions.
ICT L5 They explore the effects of changing the variables in a computer model.
- I can use combine text and graphics from different sources into a wordprocessor.
ICT L4 Pupils use IT to combine different forms of information, and show an awareness of audience.

Additional learning outcomes for some pupils

- I can investigate what my chosen destination is like.
Geog L4 They use a range of geographical skills, drawn from the Key Stage 2 or Key Stage 3 programme of study, and evidence to investigate places and themes.
- I can combine text and pictures in a desktop publisher suitable for a given audience.
ICT L5 Pupils use IT to organise, refine and present information in different forms and styles for specific purposes and audiences.
- I can compare the use of the WWW with traditional holiday brochures.
ICT L4 They compare their use of IT with other methods.

Since very few of the children had previous experience of the WWW, the first 20 minutes or so was given over to a simple introduction of how to navigate the Web by using the basic facilities of *Internet Explorer*, including the back, forward and home icons. It was emphasised that if at any time pupils became 'lost' they could return easily to the 'Home' page that had been previously set by the staff at <http://ucsm.ac.uk/staff/rays/poulton/>.

<u>Book a train</u> Your address is: Mr Nobody, 15 Nowhere St, Lancaster AA1 1AA Your e-mail is: a.person@anywhere.com.uk The password is: sesame	
<u>National Express Coaches</u>	<u>City Net</u>
<u>Cheap air fares</u>	<u>Virtual Tourist</u>
<u>Flights / Hotels</u>	<u>Visit Britain</u>



Appropriate use of capital letters

It was explained that search engines are 'case sensitive', i.e. whatever you type into the search box is precisely what the search engine will look for. If you ask the engine to search for CAMBRIDGE it will particularly look for documents containing CAMBRIDGE at the expense of those containing Cambridge.

Key point for pupils

Only use capital letters where they are needed, for example, for names.

This is a page of links, including search engines, that acted as a starting point for the less confident pupils. The concept of 'Favourites' ('Bookmarks' in Netscape) was introduced to enable pupils to return easily to sites that they had previously visited.

Throughout the day pupils worked in mixed ability groups of three children and each group was allocated a single computer with the goal of preparing a joint product by the end of the day.

Accurate spelling

Children were reminded that search engines are not intelligent and don't have a brain – they rely on the children's. So if 'Cambrige' is misspelled – that is exactly what the search engine will look for, with inevitably disappointing results.

Key point for pupils

Check that your spelling is accurate.

Retrieving information

Following the initial introduction and period of pupil exploration, the next session focused explicitly on searching and retrieving information. The children were acquainted with the concept of search engines and shown how to enter information into the search query box.

In particular, the children were alerted to the importance of:

- Selecting key words

They were advised that to find information about Cambridge in this country (as opposed to Cambridge, Massachusetts or Cambridge, New England) they would need to type in Cambridge UK.

Key point for pupils

Think carefully – what is/are the important word(s) which will help you find the information you want?

What if you don't find what you are looking for?

Pupils were told it is similar to using a book – sometimes you don't find your key word in the index. This doesn't necessarily mean that the information you are looking for is not there; it may simply be recorded in a different way. For example, car may not be in the index, but vehicle may be and would lead to information on cars.

Key point for pupils

If you don't find what you are looking for, then try alternative key words.

Finally, the children were introduced to the use of symbols to make searches more specific. Although these may sound complicated, in practice they are simple to use. They terms are used by search engines to improve the focus and accuracy of the search query.

Using the – symbol to subtract

When we need the search engine to find pages that have one word on them but not another word, we use the – symbol.

For example, if we want to find information about Cambridge but *don't* want to be overwhelmed by pages relating to the University we search this way:

+Cambridge –University

Using the + symbol to add

When we need to ensure that the search engine finds pages that have all the words we enter, not just some of them, we use the + symbol.

For example, if we want to find pages that have references to both Cambridge and England we search this way:

+Cambridge +England

Only pages that contain both words will appear in our results.

Most search engines provide guidance on effective searching and their preferred syntax.

infoseek®
United Kingdom

Type a **specific question, phrase** or **Name**.
+Cambridge +England

Search the UK or the entire World Wide Web
United Kingdom [Tips](#)

A useful site for teachers is: <http://www.searchenginewatch.com/>.

Once a search query has been entered and the results returned, the children needed to know how to access their information. Typically a new page with the first ten 'hits' will appear.

You searched for +Cambridge +England

Sites 1 - 10 of 2,114 [Hide Summaries](#) [next](#)

University of Cambridge
Information about the historic university and the surrounding count
100% <http://www.cam.ac.uk/> (Size 40K)

Cambridge News
Comprehensive news, business, sports and weather. Plus, a local guide.
100% <http://www.cambridge-news.co.uk/> (Size 10.9K)

Each 'hit' is usually presented as a hyperlink title followed by some text summarising the web page content. The children were encouraged to scan the list and decide which entries appeared to be relevant to their query before selecting the appropriate hyperlink.

'Stranger danger'

Before letting the children loose, they were asked to tell us about stranger danger warnings they had received at school and an analogy was drawn with the internet/WWW, reminding them that they must not give their name or address to anyone they do not know. It was quite likely that they would be confronted by registration requests and we advised them to use a fictitious name and e-mail address as on the 'home page'.

At regular intervals, the children were recalled for some direction on retrieval strategies and this was a good opportunity to provide some general additional guidance. There is of course a great deal of advertising and marketing on the Internet and instead of locating information about their chosen destination, some children were being sidetracked by gimmicks and advertising. Targeting young children is sadly a growing trend and pupils need to be alerted to the danger of the commercial trap.

Document preparation

The process of copying text and pictures from the Web and pasting these into a wordprocessor was demonstrated and help-sheets, as illustrated, were displayed around the room for reference.

Once the information was transferred to the wordprocessor, the children were encouraged to customise their documents by removing unnecessary text, adding their own words and editing vocabulary to make it more appropriate. In this way the product was made more relevant and meaningful to themselves and their peer group audience. Realistically this is an activity that can be continued back at school and would benefit from time and reflection.

Copying graphics from the Web into Word

1. Select your picture.
2. Position arrow over picture and click right mouse button.
3. Select <copy>.
4. Maximise Word by selecting the icon on the icon bar.
5. Select the paste tool.
6. Your picture may now be edited in Word.

Copying text from the Web into Word

1. Click and drag over text so that it is highlighted.
2. Select Edit, and from the drop down menu select Copy.
3. Maximise Word by selecting the icon on the icon bar.
4. Select the paste tool.
5. Edit text.

Remember to save!

The modelling activity

The afternoon activity was designed to allow the children to further develop their Web searching skills and to experiment with modelling using a spreadsheet. A spreadsheet called, 'Holiday Planner' was designed in Microsoft *Excel* making use of the Draw facility to create a simple and visually attractive layout. A compressed (ZIP) file can be downloaded from <http://www.ucsm.ac.uk/staff/rays/poulton/>.

The children had no prior experience of spreadsheets and benefited from a guided tour of Holiday Planner. The children were made aware of the changes that occurred in certain cells which were affected by formulae. The simplest formulae, those that totalled or multiplied, were explained and the children were invited to predict changes.

The purpose of the spreadsheet was to allow the children to experiment with modelling, by budgeting for a family holiday with a fixed allowance. In their groups the children decided on the size and composition of the family. Having entered the number of adults and the number of children into the appropriate cells, the total sum of money available was calculated and shown in cell F10.

The children were reminded that their allowance had to cover all of the holiday's costs. When asked how they planned to find out the costs of holiday expenses they reminded us that they had been using the Internet that morning to research holiday destinations. Using the key sites offered on the Holiday Web page they explored prices for flights, train fares, accommodation, insurance, and car hire. Additional costs such as food and clothes were estimated.

The purpose of the labels was to show how a child rate could be used for certain costs. In this example the family of 5 counts as 3.5 units when calculating costs at adult and child rates.

Item prices were then entered into the spreadsheet and by keeping a close watch on the balance in cell J23 the children could monitor their spending. An additional reminder was designed using an IF statement in cell J25.

=IF(H30>F10,'You are in the red!','You are in the black')

This allowed for the phrase to alternate between, 'You are in the black' to 'You are in the red' depending on the state of the balance.

If there was a negative balance the children had to experiment with reducing costs or if funds were healthy then further costs could be met. The children were encouraged to ask the key modelling question, what if . . . ?

'What if we spend more on the accommodation, can we still afford the outings?'

In fact most groups had a cautious member who closely monitored the balance throughout the activity and alerted their peers to the risk of over-spending.

The Holiday Web provided them with an excellent resource, offering easy access to appropriate travel sites. Having reviewed the travel sites it was evident that prices were not always apparent and the children were forewarned about the need to make some calculations. To

assist with these calculations the children were shown how to access the on-screen calculator or they could opt to use a standard calculator.

The activity required the children to apply a number of ICT skills, some of which they had not previously encountered. They had to search the Web, interpret and select information, occasionally calculate prices prior to entering them into the spreadsheet and make predictions about their spending and estimate costs. As they were working in groups it was also necessary for them to discuss spending plans and make decisions collaboratively.

J23		= (F6*1000)+(F8*500)-SUM(H17:H28)					
A	C	D	E	F	G	H	J
To pay for	Item Price	No. of			Cost		
Clothes	£ 50.00	5			£ 250.00		
Taxi	£ 35.00	1			£ 35.00		
Train	£ 26.00	3.5	child 0.5		£ 91.00		
Bus	£ -	0	child 0.5		£ -		
Travel Insurance	£ 45.00	3.5	child 0.5		£ 157.50		
Airfare	£ 329.00	3.5	child 0.5		£ 1,151.50		
Accommodation	£ 156.00	3.5	child 0.5		£ 546.00	Balance	
Meals	£ 50.00	5			£ 250.00		
Car Hire	£ 407.00	1			£ 407.00		
Spending Money	£ 100.00	3.5	child 0.5		£ 350.00		You are in the red!
Outings	£ 30.00	3.5	child 0.5		£ 105.00		
Entertainment	£ 40.00	5			£ 200.00		
				Total Cost	£ 3,543.00		

This area is one of the more challenging aspects of the ICT curriculum and the activity certainly provided the children with a meaningful and motivating introduction to spreadsheet modelling.

In conclusion, a fun and worthwhile day was had by all; pupils were actively engaged on a broad range of exciting tasks utilising real data. They found the Web to be easily navigable with free material of a high quality abundantly available.

So, if the Web is to prove a liberating experience, rather than yet another entanglement, we may need to avoid being taken in by the rather seductive notion of a plethora of electronic worksheets and instead be prepared to explore more open-ended tasks. These may not guarantee a tidy, predetermined outcome but nevertheless do provide opportunities to enhance a wide range of skills and concepts in motivating and 'real' contexts.

At the commencement of the project the intended learning outcomes had been shared with the pupils but during the day it became evident that some learning outcomes could also be unforeseen and potentially even more exciting.

The National Curriculum, with its emphasis on prescribed outcomes, has almost inevitably tended towards a limited range of pupil learning styles. Sadly these often include relatively passive fashions that can preclude children's interests and prove de-motivating in the longer term. Although an increased degree of freedom can be relatively unsettling for some pupils, if we provide a supportive environment and allow pupils to collaborate, the learner is placed back in control of the situation and ultimately derives greater satisfaction.

Feedback and comments, please, to
r.potter@ucsm.ac.uk

Where do we go from here?

Dr Tony Lyons

tonylyons@dknet.co.uk

The role of the IT coordinator is not to be envied. It is not a role for the faint hearted nor is it a position for anyone without heaps of patience and time . . . at least, this seems to be the case in many schools today. The IT coordinator has the tough role of guiding through curriculum changes as well as full-time teaching commitments and having to weave through the continually moving goal posts of other curricular areas. Some will point out that other core curriculum coordinators have had a challenging time of late. And, okay, the IT coordinator has the added bit of trying to sort out the NOF training and to encourage their colleagues to take the opportunities it offers seriously. But what makes the role of the IT coordinator different is not the development of the curriculum nor is it the NOF training: it is the additional problem of the hardware they have to face.

A computer network is a holy grail before it arrives in the school. When it arrives, and is up and running smoothly, it is a great situation with a great deal of potential. But when the messages appear on the screen, 'illegal operation . . .', 'hard drive not found', 'system error' or '. . . not found' or when a machine freezes, or a printer isn't accessible from a particular machine . . . that is when the IT coordinator becomes only too aware that this is a complex new world. Even in schools where there is no network, an increased number of machines alongside the wider use of computers will give rise to more technical errors.

In most non-teaching working environments where a computer network exists there is a network administrator and/or a technician. By contrast, in the primary school there is a heavily worked, full-time teacher. In

the non-teaching working environment, the technician or administrator will have had some proper training; in most primary schools, apart from the day or so provided when the system was installed, all that exists is the technical helpline.

The time needed for technical support will grow for a variety of reasons:

- New settings may be needed
- New programs may be acquired
- New user accounts will need setting up, not least at the start of each academic year. Beyond that there is troubleshooting:
- There is a risk of problems after new software is added or old software is removed;
- As the children become more experienced with the system the desire to personalise a machine at school, or to tweak the settings may be increasingly tempting.
- Otherwise, as the system becomes older, the fickleness of an ageing machine may become a cause for concern.

In 'the old days', the LEA provided technical support and audiovisual repairs. The more modern approach with some LEAs is to buy in such services; other LEAs don't offer either service. Even where the support is offered, the timescale for this can be variable.

The IT coordinator is there to organize teaching and learning through IT. The IT coordinator is not in the school to be a technical troubleshooter, although increasingly this is becoming part of their remit. There are four solutions appearing in schools in the South Manchester and North-East Cheshire areas.

1. *Buying in and using the LEA support.* This is as close to the old days as possible. The staff know the schools and the work is invariably well done and closely in line with the latest regulations. They offer super courses for the teachers, including, in many cases, NOF training.
2. *Buying in the services of an outside agency.* *Into Action Computers Ltd, Manchester;* for instance, has broad in-school experience and offers full technical support, alongside staff training, resource and policy authoring. They also offer Intranet development and support.
3. *Enlisting the support of the hardware supplier.* This can be technically sound, and the advice can be constructive, but often is restricted to the machines purchased from them. Staff training opportunities can be limited.
4. *Clusters of schools sharing a technician.* Sometimes this is done through the local secondary school. The technical support is on hand and can resolve most problems quickly and efficiently.
5. *Employing a full-time or part-time dedicated IT teacher.* This is beneficial for the curricular work, and can lead to a resolution of a high number of the technical problems.

New horizons were found when the NGfL was launched and primary schools began considering how they were best going to incorporate IT as a key part of the school curriculum. Some schools have established, or are establishing, IT suites; others have opted to expand computer use within the classrooms. The curriculum has been shaken; not only is the teaching of good IT skills more vital than ever, not least in the early years, but across the curriculum thought is being given as to how the expansion of primary IT can promote and enhance different subjects in new ways. This itself has given rise to software considerations; no longer is the 'software-for-kids' an ideal solution to all curricular requirements, nor will it satisfy the developing skills of the children after several years of regular use. The

monitoring and assessment of IT has been given new thought and is posing new problems. It is a period of great change, and it is a time in which the IT enthusiast has the opportunity to have a bigger impact than ever. And even the most reluctant of schools or the most technophobic of teachers have had to accept some mobility in their awareness and use of IT.

Beyond that, schools are compelled to consider their IT future in light of the NOF training plans. Some schools are seizing this as an opportunity to change. Alongside NOF training for the staff, some teachers are being given IT-dedicated roles, be it for a day each week, for a term's block or even for a new role in the primary school. These situations invariably arise in schools where the head teacher and the governing body are willing and the budget has the flexibility. In such cases there is the opportunity for a clear direction in IT.

Gone are the days when the title 'IT coordinator' was an add-on to somebody's portfolio of areas of responsibility and when the technical bits were not all that vital. From the days of the Acorn in the corner of most classrooms (a machine that was so robust that children who had not been born when the machine left the factory are, in many schools, still using them today) the computer age has brought change. There has been the arrival of the PC as the major format of computers in most schools at the same time as the expansion of primary school networks and a wide use of the Internet. Each of these factors brings new technical hurdles. PCs, by their nature, have a complex operating system, a factor compounded by the use of a network. Beyond this, the Internet brings about periodic problems.

This new age of computers in primary school potentially has massive benefits for both teaching and learning; it is no exaggeration to say that it could revolutionise education. But schools need to consider how their valuable technology can be both maintained and well used. These considerations need to be incorporated into schools' financial planning and in defining the role of the IT coordinator.

What are the most efficient teaching strategies for Information Technology in the Early Years?

Beth Weeks

B.A. (QTS) student at the University of Central England

A small-scale research project such as this where only eight 2-hour sessions are being used for analysis does not give a sound scope on the whole area across the globe. There were many external factors connected with this particular school that may not be true for others and may affect the results and findings.

There is a lack of published material concerning teaching strategies in the Early Years for IT. It is

important for teachers and learning assistants to know and recognise the most effective ways of teaching IT to provide a sound learning experience for their pupils.

- During the eight sessions at a school I had hoped
- to learn the capabilities of Early Years in IT
 - to develop children's knowledge and understanding of the computer
 - to identify and develop teaching strategies for IT

- to recognise discrepancies in the teaching of IT
- to work collaboratively with a colleague
- to be able to draw conclusions from observations taken during sessions
- to motivate class teachers and learning assistants to use the computer more regularly
- to recognise strengths and weaknesses in my own teaching and build upon these
- to produce a small scale research project which may aid further studies

Methodology

The methods chosen by a researcher can have a significant consequence on the results of a study. It was therefore imperative that my colleague and I choose approaches that would suit our particular study.

There were many external factors and issues surrounding our eight visits to the school that had to be taken into account when deciding our chosen research methods.

By using various methods of observation we would be able to draw upon our findings at the end of each session to help us plan our next session. Our techniques involved mixing overt and covert with participant and non-participant observations to obtain the best results.

If we had conducted completely covert observations, and only two children were being studied an observer would have been very noticeable. However, if we had only used overt observations the children may have changed their natural behaviour because they knew they were being assessed.

By telling the children that they would either be taught by my colleague or myself the children did not notice that one of us was observing and just looked upon us as someone in the background or a helper.

Our chosen methods of observation meant that we were able to record our findings easily. Many sociologists and researchers who have chosen to observe covertly find this one of the harder aspects. It is difficult to remember specific facts, for example remembering which children are left- and right-handed or which children had used the mouse before.

Due to the nature of this research project it was not appropriate to look at secondary data such as previous research or books as information technology changes so fast, published data is out of date and the area of my research is one that has not been investigated.

It was most appropriate to use structured questions such as 'can the child remember how to use the mouse?' to help record the observations rather than unstructured ones. As the children were so young, interviewing and questionnaires were not suitable.

We gained our evidence through:

- General observations of individual children at the computer
- Set closed questions e.g. can child do?
- Rating charts with a key

The methods that gave us the most useful results were those of the set closed questions, which were then repeated with the nursery class.

It is a known fact that children are very receptive at an early age and can therefore learn quickly. The CHES study (Whitebread 1996)

'revealed that lasting long-term effects are dependent upon the quality of the early educational experience.' (p. 18)

Therefore, as with any subject, the quality of the teaching is essential.

It is vital in information technology that the teachers are computer literate or familiar with the programs, which the school offers their pupils. Our findings showed that the teachers in both the nursery and the reception class lacked the necessary confidence and competence in using the computer, thus showing or giving little interest to the teaching of IT. This matter was not helped by the varying staffing problem in the Reception class where supply teachers were changed often. However, by involving the nursery class teacher and assistant in our work we were able to get a better result and a higher interest into the teaching of IT.

McKinsey 1997 (Littledyke and Huxford 1998) says that

'ICT training of teachers is the most important critical success factor in improving the use of ICT in schools. Clearly both teacher and pupil basic skilling are needed to provide the foundation to successful classroom use of ICT.' (p. 100)

This gives us 'teaching strategy number 1'. Always involve your classroom support; if necessary show them how to access the computer and use the relevant software. Working as a team is vital!

There was a substantial difference between the capabilities of the Nursery and Reception class. Surprisingly the nursery children proved able to grasp and learn more successfully than their older contemporaries did. As the Reception children had not been taught ways of holding the mouse, names of parts of the computer, or how to use the software available . . . they had made it up for themselves.

In our first observations in the Reception class on 13 October we noted that the children were finding it very difficult to keep hold of the mouse and click after they had positioned it on the screen. Even after teaching the children how to hold the mouse properly they still reverted back to their original ways. This was due to two problems:

- the children had not been taught how to hold or use a mouse before and had just been left to get on with it by themselves.
- the children had been using the 'tracker' or 'roller' ball before using the mouse. Unfortunately the tracker ball, whilst making mouse control easier, proved to hinder control generally when it came to using the mouse.

This was still noted during our four sessions in the Reception class. With proper supervision and support the children would have eventually learnt how to hold and use the mouse in a much more beneficial way. The Nursery children, however, picked up mouse skills very

quickly as they were learning from scratch. By helping the children to position their hand on the mouse and using their index finger to click with, the children quickly learnt how to work unsupported.

Another strategy that was discussed at the end of the study was the prospect of using a coloured sticker to mark the left button on the mouse. This would help children who find it difficult to put their finger on a specific mouse button. They would soon get used to positioning their finger correctly and the sticker could be removed.

The second teaching strategy emphasises the importance of learning correct ways from the beginning. Schools should incorporate in their planning the correct teaching of the following on entry into school to assure correct usage.

- Mouse control including hand positioning and double clicking
- Names of parts of the computer
- Keyboard
- Mouse
- Mouse mat
- Printer
- Monitor
- Teaching children how to use software properly.

Another point that was raised was the need for teachers to choose their software carefully. This was also highlighted in our first visits where we changed the software to suit the children's and teacher's needs. It is vital that the software meets the children's needs.

Another strategy that has major implications for teaching is the need for teachers to familiarise themselves with their software and to select what they will use with the children depending on varying factors in each classroom. These factors include

- class size
- length of running time on program,
- capabilities of individual children,
- relevance to 'topic' or subject

Helen Constable (Anning 1995) says

'Knowing which software is appropriate for Early Years is not always easy. Using a limited range of software well rather than giving the children access to lots of programs which they will not fully exploit is the best strategy.' (p. 69)

Another point to take into consideration when choosing software is that giving children intellectual software that will challenge them proves to be a vital tool in providing them with a sound learning experience.

Piaget (Whitebread 1996) says

'Children learn by a process of actively constructing their own understandings. All the evidence suggests that a learning environment which helps children to do this will, not surprisingly be one which challenges them intellectually and stimulates them to be mentally active.' (p. 9)

Rather than taking children in groups to work at the computer we paired children, as research by many, including Kruger (1993) and Paolette (1995), has shown that working in pairs is more effective.

'Pairs of children solve problems more effectively than when they work alone.' (Kruger 1993 in Bennett 1997)

'Pairs of children work more consistently and accurately than individuals on computer tasks . . .'

(Paolette 1995 in Bennett 1997)

We were able to review this by trying in the Reception class to see if working in groups of three would make any difference. Our findings were quite significant as, when working in threes, the children were much more likely to become distracted by background noise as they were not always involved in the activity on the computer. This frustrated the children at not being able to have 'their turn' so often. We took this into consideration for the next lesson and continued to only have two children at the computer at any one time. Blease and Cohen 1990 (Bennett 1997) also found that 'younger children work better in pairs, whereas older children work better in threes.' 'Teaching strategy number 4' – always have Early Years children working in pairs.

The fifth strategy that we incorporated into our teaching in both Nursery and Reception classes was where the teacher should sit. By analysing our first few sessions in the Reception class we reviewed the ways in which we could provide a higher quality of support to the children and also keep them away from distractions in the classroom. It proved to be more beneficial for the teacher to sit slightly behind the children but in the centre to give equal support for both children. This also meant that the children were less distracted and stayed on task.

It is known that by providing positive reinforcement children will respond positively and be more motivated. My colleague and I made sure that we both offered positive rewards in a number of ways including:

- simple verbal methods, e.g. well done
- facial expressions, e.g. smiling
- gestures, e.g. clapping hands
- tone of voice

Chris Kyriacou (1992) says

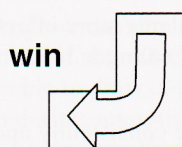
'it is generally better to give specific help that relates to the task than critical feedback about performance or critical comments about the pupil.'

He later goes on to say that

'pupil behaviour which is rewarded is more likely to occur in the same situation in future.' (p. 105)

We also devised certificates that could be given as a reward when each child had managed successfully to use the mouse independently. Unfortunately we did not have the funds to produce enough to give out to both classes.

One of our aims was to teach the children to set up the computer from scratch. This involved typing in the letters 'win' and then pressing return. Unfortunately the children did not know the letters of the alphabet, which presented us with a problem. After some discussion we decided to make a visual aid which could be taped to the computer table reading:



This would enable children to copy the letters from the visual aid on to the monitor using the keyboard. Our aim was that the children would use this often and would soon no longer need the aid as the process would have committed to their memory.

Another strategy that we used was a display about the program the Nursery was using showing work that the children had completed. We designed the display to be interactive and aesthetically pleasing. The design of the display was extremely important as the children had to be able to relate it to the computer.

By taking the introduction, first page or front cover of a program, teachers can reproduce it on the display adding children's printed work and interactive questions. This is a marvellous way of celebrating the children's work. Our observations showed that the children were very interested in the display and related it to their work with us on the computer.

Our study proved that visual aids are a necessary aspect of teaching. A flip chart was made to guide children through one of the programs used in the school. The children showed much interest and were able to use it to their advantage, making their computer sessions more beneficial.

One of the more significant findings in our study was how quickly the Nursery children learnt and became independent computer users compared with those children in Reception. This was due to teacher support during the time when we were not at the school. The Nursery teacher and assistant became involved with our work and supported the children by encouraging them to use the computer and assisting them when they needed it. 'Practice makes perfect' is true in this instance where we were able to see remarkable improvements in IT in just four sessions.

An important strategy is to give equal time on the computers to all children in the class. It has been shown in other studies that high achievers and quick workers tend to have greater access to the computer as it is often used for extension activities by those who finish tasks first or as rewards for those who have done well. To combat this problem tick lists should be drawn up; each time the child uses the computer (s)he must tick off her/his own name. The teacher must monitor the sheets to make sure that every child is getting equal access to the computer.

In conclusion, there are many effective and efficient teaching strategies that can be adopted.

The strategies that I have found most useful are:

- Collaboration between teachers and learning assistants is vital.
- Spend time investigating software and feel comfortable in using it before giving it to the children.
- Start teaching children correct vocabulary and

correct ways of using equipment on entry to school. This way the children will not pick up bad habits which will be difficult to break.

- If necessary mark the left-hand mouse button with a coloured sticker and encourage children to use their index finger to double- and single-click it.
- Ensure that when the mouse has been positioned the button is clicked before the child takes his/her hand off the mouse.
- Choose software carefully. Make sure that it provides children with an intellectual learning experience and that it correlates with other work you may be doing in your classroom.
- Arrange for children to work in pairs at the computer, with an adult sitting directly behind them.
- Use positive reinforcement to enhance behaviour and reward children's achievements.
- Use a variety of methods such as verbal, facial expressions, and gestures such as clapping.
- Use rewards such as certificates when children achieve specific goals.
- Use as many visual aids as is necessary so that methods and operations will be committed to memory (these may also aid the teacher!).
- Laminate visual aids so that they can be used time and time again.
- Use a name chart to monitor children's progress and time spent on the computer. Ensure that all children get equal opportunities to use the computer and not just those who have finished their work first.

Unfortunately, most studies seem to take place in secondary schools. My own findings stressed the importance of learning correct methods in the early years of schooling, and how beneficial a sound learning experience in Early Years can provide a sound foundation to build upon as the child develops.

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Letter writing

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The letter has long been a format for the novel from *Clarissa* or *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*; Rose Tremain uses it in *Letters to Sister Benedicta* and there are many other examples.

The letter places the action in space and time; it limits it to the knowledge of the letter writer and thereby allows the reader to construct by inference the wider implications. From information 'let slip' by the letter writer, the reader can deduce facts of which the protagonists are unaware.

So there are two levels of enlightenment in such a novel; the level of the letter-writer's maturing awareness and the level of the reader's intuiting of another version of the action. This might be further developed if there is more than one letter writer in the action.

Teaching context

Teachers are exhorted to encourage the skills of letter-writing with their pupils. Are these purely secretarial skills or are they life skills? What relevance have they for electronic communication?

Several teachers use the letter as a way of encouraging writing for an audience. It has often been a consequence of the term's project on pollution: the letter to an official outlining the findings and sometimes expecting an answer.

Letter writing could also be the way of explaining taught material to another audience which needed to be enlightened. One beginning teacher identified an alien who was on a waterless planet. All the children in the class had to write letters explaining the water cycle and why water was necessary to life on Earth. The student answered the letters asking further questions as a way of eliciting clear answers. She never knew the extent to which the children suspended disbelief but they colluded in her charade which included bringing into class an enormous envelope stamped with the postmark of the alien's planet from which she unfolded his 5-foot high request for information.

Character

The SATs Reviews for English in KS2 often ask for inference of character development in a passage. The development of children's understanding in this area can be best developed using 'chapter books' through the length and scope of reading about a character over time.

With many *Goosebumps* or Roald Dahl books (except *Danny, the Champion of the World*) this development of character is often not evident. Other children's novels like *Goodnight, Mr Tom* are a study of changing characters and their relationships over a long time and

repay careful class reading and discussion or dramatic interpretation.

I would like to recommend two books which are for younger children and which allow the exploration of character through letters while providing a model for letter writing for children.

Dear Mr Henshaw by Beverley Cleary consists of the letters of a schoolboy to an author and his growing confidence in his own authorial voice. It uses the epistolary format as a means of introspection.

A Pack of Liars by Anne Fine is about penpals and the possibility of deception.

Both of these books could provide models of letter-writing that are to do with personal discovery and growing moral awareness. The second is relevant to e-mail in that it shows someone who constructs a different persona for themselves in their letters.

E-mail

Where do the new technologies fit into this? At the first level they can provide templates that model the letter format and relieve the writer of the drudgery of setting up; they provide a choice of such formats and a focus for decision about the message to be conveyed to the receiver, be it formal or informal.

But, in line with the books above, and others like Betsy Byars' *Computer Nut*, letters provide a way of constructing an imaginary identity and the implications of this have been explored in depth by such authors as Sherry Turkle. There are plenty of stories of people who use e-mail to communicate with others using another persona, one that is of a different sex, class or occupation. Letter-writers in e-mail can 'become authors, not only of text but of themselves, constructing new selves through social interaction' (Turkle). The use of e-mail has now become a feature in communication for information or misinformation between people locked, for example, in different war zones.

Schools are now commonly using e-mail to compare cultures, to write extended stories and to look for expertise. A good example of this in book form is *Jazeera's Journey* by Lisa Bruce, which traces the voyage of Jazeera whose family migrates to England, through the exchange of letters between her and her grandmother in India.

In the same way that the boy in the Beverley Cleary book writes to his author, Mr Henshaw, children in school can write to 'experts' in whatever their area of interest.

E-mail itself has its own conventions and the debate about formality and informality is a lively one. English teachers could see this as part of the spectrum of writing for an audience and thus explore the 'secretarial' skills of letter-writing in a more profound context.

What is the place of ICT in the Literacy Hour?

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The National Literacy Strategy and ICT in context

It is interesting to reflect on the key educational policies and strategies of this government. We have the Literacy Strategy, the Numeracy Strategy and the National Grid for Learning backed up by the New Opportunities Training fund for teachers. The place of ICT is secured in the new slimmed down National Curriculum. The impression we receive from government strategies is that ICT does and will have a huge impact on teaching and learning. If this is the case, where does ICT fit into the Literacy Hour?

The National Literacy Strategy (NLS) Framework and Distance Learning materials have few explicit references to ICT. There are no teaching examples of ICT use on the training videos and a quick straw poll of literacy consultants from different LEAs reveals patchy classroom use of ICT during the Literacy Hour.

Using ICT within the Literacy Hour can seem like an added burden to teachers with both Numeracy and Literacy Strategies to contend with. Responses from teachers when asked about ICT and literacy vary from, 'I know I need to use ICT more but . . .' 'Don't talk to me about computers at the moment', 'I've no time,' or even quite frequently, 'It doesn't work!' However, there are increasing pressures for ICT to be used as an integral part of literacy learning and many schools are aware that ICT use is a particular weakness that needs addressing.

It is true that in the early stages of NLS implementation ICT had a low profile. Things are beginning to change and a publication to support teachers is in the pipeline sponsored by NAACE (The organisation for Advisers in computer education). However, in many schools ICT use continues to be problematic.

Issues

A number of issues need to be resolved before ICT can be used as an effective tool within the Literacy

Hour structure. There is still vast under-resourcing. Most primary schools have approximately one computer per classroom. They are often unreliable and inconveniently situated. New computers are arriving in classrooms as a result of the National Grid for Learning. However, there is a lack of teacher knowledge, skill and training. Some of this will be addressed by The New Opportunities Fund training. Yet, because the funding provides training but not equipment one detractor described the initiative as 'learning to drive without a car'. When every school is wired up to the Internet and to electronic mail systems, teachers will need to have the skills and knowledge to make imaginative use of these resources.

Guiding principles

Here are five guiding principles which should underpin any attempt to resolve these issues.

- Firstly ICT should be used as a resource to teach the NLS objectives for literacy, not the objectives for IT capability.
- ICT should only be selected as a resource if it is more effective than alternatives.
- Planning will need to take into account a broad range of ICT tools including portables, multi-media desktops, simple wordprocessors, programmable toys and spellcheckers.
- Activities with ICT need to be based on clear learning objectives from the Framework at word, sentence or text level.
- Feedback and assessment should not be left out of the equation.

ICT use in the Literacy Hour

So how can we answer the practical question of what kind of ICT use can be sensibly managed in the Literacy Hour? These are some suggestions:

- Printouts can be used so that pupils can work on a similar task at or away from the computer.
- ICT activities can be differentiated by providing prepared texts to work on or by expecting pupils

Once upon a time there was a dark, dark village.

In the village there was a dark, dark street

In the street there was a dark, dark garden

In the garden there was a dark, dark shed

In the shed there was a dark, dark door

Behind the door there was a dark, dark cupboard

In the cupboard there was a dark, dark corner

In the corner there was a dark, dark box

Inside the box there was a ghost.

Woodville Infant School, Derbyshire.

to add to a text; to develop their own version or to design and create texts for others to publish.

- The computer can be used as an electronic whiteboard and interactions can take place in front of all the pupils.
- A small number of open-ended programs can be used for creative and reinforcement activities. These allows pupils to become familiar with the programs and therefore independent in their use. Examples of programs would include a word-processor, a desktop publisher and programs like *My World* and *Clicker*.
- The click and drop or cut, copy and paste facilities on wordprocessors can be used to allow text to be sequenced, sorted or matched.
- Short snappy tasks are the most effective. Examples of these might include producing captions, lists, poems, posters and recipes. Long text-entering activities are the least useful way of using computers in the Literacy Hour
- Modelling the development of extended writing by editing writing and then working on printouts at various stages is an excellent use of a wordprocessor.
- Tried and tested reinforcement activities can be used
- There needs to be access to different types of texts including those with sound, moving images and non-linear structure.
- Finally there is a need to explicitly teach searching strategies for electronic referencing systems.

ICT in each part of The Literacy Hour

In order to answer the question 'where does ICT fit in the Literacy Hour?' this article covers each element in turn.

In the first 15 minutes during **shared reading** texts can be read on screen. ICT is another medium to access print where text can be displayed, looked

Play Script from a story

'Tom's Midnight Garden'

[Scene: Uncle Alan's house, Tom's bedroom.]

UNCLE ALAN *[slamming his fist down on the table]*
Tom, there must be no more of this. You are not to put the light on once it has been put out; nor, equally, are you to get out of bed. You must see the reasonableness ...

TOM *[interrupting]*
Not even to get up in the morning?

UNCLE ALAN *[annoyed]*
Of course, that's different. Don't be silly, Tom. But you are not to get up otherwise. The reason is ...

TOM *[pleading]*
Can't I get up, even if I need to, badly?

UNCLE ALAN *[strong voice, pacing up and down]*
Of course, you must go to the lavatory, if you need to; but you will go straight back to bed afterwards. You to bed at nine in the evening and get up at seven in the morning. That is ten hours. You need those ten hours' sleep because ...

TOM *[suddenly sitting up]*
But, Uncle Alan, I don't sleep!

UNCLE ALAN *[shouting]*
Will you be quiet, Tom! I'm trying to with you! Now, where was I?

TOM *[aside, and quietly]*
Ten hours' sleep.

Kate & Anna

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at more carefully, marked or located with a pointer. Research highlights the positive effect of using talking books and these could be a resource for shared reading, guided reading or independent work. Alternatively, electronic texts can be used and different reading pathways can be demonstrated. For example, websites are read quite differently from traditional texts.

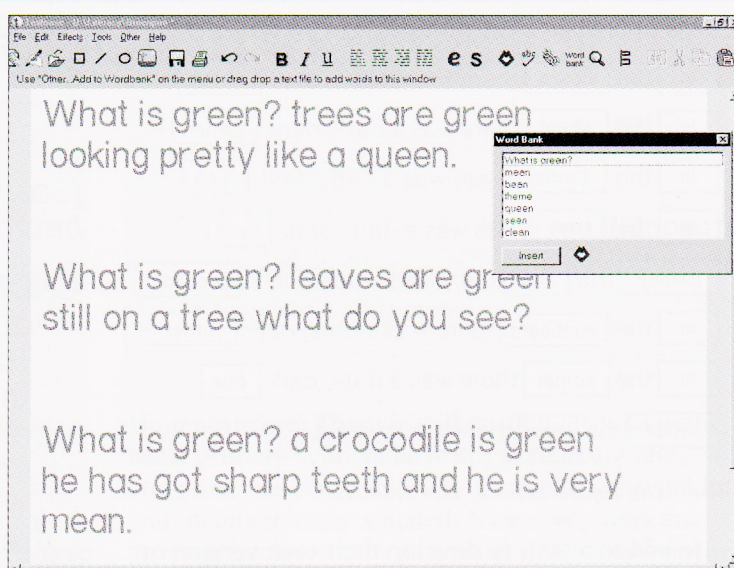
Shared writing using a wordprocessor and a large screen can be an excellent means of modelling extended writing or demonstrating a return to and a reshaping of texts. It is often helpful for shared writing to be taught after word level work so pupils can go straight into independent and guided writing activities.

An example of a shared writing activity could include changing a short extract from a narrative into a play-script (Y6 T1 T9 Literacy Objective). This could be carried out while the children are grouped round a computer monitor. The teacher would 'think aloud' about how descriptive passages can be turned into stage directions. Presentation would be discussed including the use of italics, bold print and brackets.

Other examples might include editing existing texts during shared writing. A short text can be entered into a wordprocessor and saved under different names as the text is annotated, highlighted and discussed. A writing frame can be jointly constructed from an existing text. This would involve deleting content and leaving behind the cohesive ties that knit a text together. At the simplest level this may mean a writing frame consisting of a series of time connectives, 'First . . . , Then . . . , After that . . . , Finally . . . ' The text might be recreated by changing the setting or characters. Adjectives or verbs might be strengthened and the effect on the resulting text discussed.

Generally it has not occurred to teachers that a computer can be used as an alternative to flash-cards, to playing a word game or to writing on the board. **Word-level work** can be varied by using a computer in this way. Phonemes or rimes can be presented using different colours and, during independent work, lists of words can be used for independent investigations involving sorting and categorising.

Incorporating ICT into some **guided writing** sessions is ideal. The teacher can support pupils who are working round two or three desktops or who are using a set of portable computers. Composing, drafting, editing, proofreading and publishing can all be guided and supported. The guided



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sessions can support and develop the focus introduced during shared writing.

Independent working time provides an obvious opportunity for the use of ICT in the Literacy Hour. Pupils can write collaboratively using word-processors, use talking books, access a carefully controlled internet site, write and send an e-mail letter, use a multimedia text or interact with reinforcement and practice programs.

The **plenary** will be a chance for pupils who have been using ICT to receive feedback and reinforcement. It will be interesting to compare the advantages and disadvantages of using either ICT or pen and paper.

In Conclusion

Why should we use ICT and when is it more effective than other methods? ICT involves a change of approach. It is stimulating, motivating and challenging. It can provide support for the less able pupils or challenge at the top end of the class. It encourages drafting and editing. This can be a real boon as often improving writing is little more than 'copying up neatly'. It can provide success for unmotivated boys. Research also shows that children concentrate longer with a screen in front of them than they do with a book. ICT leads to new skills and provides good opportunities to practise existing skills. It motivates and gives a fresh response to the skills of reading and writing.

Finally, computers have an underrated value as a whole-class or whole-group teaching aid. Computers are powerful and effective tools. They become even more powerful when the teacher provides a learning interface between pupils and machines.

Literacy Hour and the use of ICT

Trevor Millum

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There is a feeling current in Primary education at the moment that ICT is hard to make use of in Literacy Hour and that ICT is generally being employed less than it was in the teaching and learning of English. It is easy to see why this might be so. On the other hand, there are good reasons to be using ICT in Literacy Hour and straightforward ways of doing so.

I believe the main reason for the lack of ICT is the 'whole class' aspect of much of the Literacy Hour and the fact that we have forgotten one of the most powerful uses of the computer: as a teacher's tool. Even an ordinary machine, with a standard monitor, can be put to good use with a whole class. If you have a large monitor or other means of presenting a bigger image, so much the better, but they are not essential.

Let me suggest two approaches, one which makes use of any wordprocessor and one which uses specific software. You are teaching a Y4 class and about to embark on adding *ing* to words ending with *e*.

Set your wordprocessor to display a large font, say 28 point, and type in a list of a dozen or so typical words, e.g. care, come, face, file, give, glue, hope, ice, joke, like, live, love, make. Type *ing* after the first few. Explain the rule (again!) and delete the spaces between the word and the suffix; finally delete the *e* also, showing in this dynamic way how the joining and the deletion are part of the same action. It can be more effective to have your *ing* suffixes in a different font:

caring
coming
facing
filing
give ing
glue ing
hope ing

Now let individuals come and carry out the same action. If you have a talking wordprocessor, you can listen to the sounds of the words and then compare them to some commonly written errors such as 'comming' and 'hopping'. Simple though this kind of activity seems, it is more memorable than using pencil and paper or talk and chalk/ marker pen.

WordWork, a program from RESOURCE, enables a similar concentration on specific word-level learning. Once again, the screen displays are so big and so clear that a whole class can easily see what is going on. The teacher selects Year 4 and is then taken to a screen displaying all of the word level lists (38 of them). A click on 'Adding to words ending in e' brings up a long list of the words we have just been discussing. Any activity from fourteen possibilities can then be selected and used with the class. In this case, I would probably choose the one called 'Reveal' as it displays one word, e.g. care, and hides the other – waiting for a click to reveal it. There are plenty of other activities, such as Shannon's Game (a version of hangman where you must work sequentially from left to right) which work well to introduce and reinforce language concepts at word level.

Once you begin to use the wordprocessor as a teaching tool, you will think of a host of other ways in which it can be employed. Take the addition of *ly* to words such as love, lone, like and live, for example. Use the drag and drop facility to physically move the errant *e* in misspellings such as lovley to its correct place. Try also highlighting the *ly* and then increasing the size; hold down Ctrl + Shift and > (greater than) and watch the letters get bigger and bigger before your eyes. It's a good way to fix a certain letter string in pupils' minds, especially if they get to have a go at it too.

lovely lovely lovely lovely lovely

Sentence level work can be tackled in similar ways. Write some simple sentences and take out the verbs. 'Sheffield Wednesday the goals in the first half.' 'Teresa all the sticky buns.' What's missing? Where should they go? Let's try typing them into the sentence. Some sentences will allow verbs to be inserted in more than one place. Now try adding adverbs. They can go in all sorts of places! Does a different position affect the meaning of the sentence? Swiftly, Teresa ate all the sticky buns. Teresa swiftly ate all the sticky buns. Teresa ate all the sticky buns swiftly. All of this can be done by traditional methods, of course. However, the ease with which you can copy and paste words and sentences means that innumerable combinations can be tried – there is room for experimentation in a way which is hard using other methods.

As a follow-up you might wish to use tables to set up an exercise like this for group activity. Pupils drag and drop or cut and paste their choice of verb into the sentence. Columns 2 to 4 might also contain unsuitable verbs, non-verbs and so on.

Teresa	all the sticky buns.	ate	found	bought
The cat	on the rug in the sunshine.	slept	purred	lay

There are a host of other ways of introducing ICT into the Literacy Hour – and of course to the teaching of English beyond the hour. In addition, there are so many motivating and effective techniques to encourage and develop writing at whole text level – but that's another story for another time. . . .

Or, more challenging:

Suddenly the Hispaniola came right into the wind. The jibs behind ____ aloud; the rudder ____ to; the whole ship gave a sickening heave and shudder, and at the same moment the main-boom ____ inboard, the sheet ____ in the blocks, and showed me the lee after-deck. For a while the ship kept ____ and ____ sidling like a vicious horse, the sails ____ and the boom swinging to and fro till the mast ____ under the strain.

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bucking	cracked	sidling	groaning
filling	swung	slammed	groaned

Activities for *Tray* at KS2

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(The focus of *Tray* is clearly English/Literacy and so the activities described below are linked to the National Curriculum – English – Programme of Study and National Literacy Strategy (NLS).)

In the initial stages, *Tray* is a sort of 'hangman' activity, but to describe it in this way entirely fails to do justice to its potential as a tool for teaching and learning. A piece of text is stored in the computer but remains hidden from the readers except for its basic structure – an underscore marks the position of each letter, all punctuation and numerals are shown and capitals are indicated with a bullet. Children can be asked to make predictions about the text based on what they can see of its structure and to suggest possible letters. Once a letter has been successfully predicted it is possible to see all further occurrences of that letter. Thus the text is slowly revealed with the readers constantly revising their hypotheses about the words, the sentences and the text as a whole.

For maximum benefit to be derived from the software it is important that the activity is teacher-led, at least in the early stages. A group of around six children is probably best in promoting maximum discussion and interaction and thus the activity could easily be used as one of the group activities in the Literacy Hour. Groups need not be matched tightly for ability. The program works well with mixed ability groups who are able to support one another's learning. However the text should be appropriate to the interest and ability levels of children in the group.

Six sample texts are provided, three broadly suitable for Year 3/4 pupils and three for Year 5/6 pupils. The age groupings are only indicative, however – you may choose to use the Y5/6 texts with more able pupils in Y3/4 and vice versa. For each age group there is a poem, a piece of prose containing direct speech, and an extract from a non-fiction text. All the texts are given below with some suggestions about the issues you may wish to

focus on in preliminary discussion, and approaches to developing the text.

In most versions of *Tray* screen printouts are available at all stages and can be used to map progress or for linked work away from the computer.

Activity 1 – A poem

Learning objectives linked to NLS Sentence and Text level work:

- to distinguish between rhyming and non rhyming poetry and comment on the impact of layout (Y3 T1 Text level work 7);
- other uses of capitalisation . . . e.g. new lines in poetry (Y3 T2 Sentence level work 8);
- to compare forms or types of humour (Y3 T3 Text level work 6);
- to identify clues which suggest poems are older, e.g. language use, vocabulary, archaic words (Y4 T2 Text level work 6);
- to identify different patterns of rhyme and verse in poetry (Y4 T2 Text level work 7)
- to recognise some simple forms of poetry (Y4 T3 Text level work 7);
- to analyse and compare poetic style (Y5 T1 Text level work 7);
- to investigate humorous verse (Y6 T2 Text level work 4).

Year 3/4 – Sample 1

5 little brothers set out together
To journey the livelong day,
In a curious carriage made of leather
They hurried away, away!
One big brother, and 3 quite small,
And one wee fellow, no size at all.

The carriage was dark and none too roomy,
And they could not move about;
The 5 little brothers grew very gloomy,
And the wee one began to pout,
So big brother said: 'What do you say?
Let's leave the carriage and run away!'

So out they scampered, the 5 together,
And off and away they sped;
When somebody found the carriage of leather,
Oh my, how she shook her head!
Twas her little boy's shoe, as everyone knows,
And the 5 little brothers were 5 little toes.

(This text may be too long for some versions of *Tray*. If so omit the final verse and just give out a text version of it at the end of the activity).

Year 5/6 – Sample 2

There Was A Young Lady From Ickenham
There was a young lady from Ickenham
Who went on a bus trip to Twickenham.
She drank too much beer,
Which made her feel queer,
So she took off her boots
and was sick-in-'em.

1. Direct the attention of the group to the layout. Ask them what is distinctive about it and what it tells them about the text. Try to avoid giving too much away but be receptive to children's suggestions.

Issues to draw out are features which mark it as poetry:

- the distinct lines, usually with punctuation at the end;
- the use of capitals at the start of each line;
- the use of capitals in the line at the top of the screen (thus probably a title);
- the match between this title line and the first line of the text (for the limerick);
- the structure and number of lines (someone may spot that the Y5/6 text is a limerick).
- Children may also spot the strangely punctuated word at the end of the limerick and the exclamation marks and speech marks in the riddle. If these are not spotted at this stage do not point them out but leave them to be discovered later.

2. Having made as many hypotheses as possible on the strength of the structure alone, ask whether it is possible to make a guess at any of the letters.

- The single letter word 'a' figures in both poems – children should be able to identify that the English language has only two common single-letter words – 'a' and 'I'. Since the letter is not a capital it is probably 'a'. This is the type of analysis you should be looking for as children work with the program. Try to draw it out in discussion, prompting where necessary.
- The riddle contains a word with an apostrophe (Let's). 'S' is the most likely letter to follow the apostrophe.

3. Predict the letter and choose to see all other occurrences of the predicted letter.

4. Discuss what else can be predicted:

- If the Y5/6 text has been identified as a limerick much of the first line can be predicted. If not, ask for a guess at the three-letter word beginning with 'a' in the final line ('and' is most likely). See all occurrences of 'n' and 'd'. Draw attention to the word with 'ad' in the title and top line. What could come after the 'd'? 'E' would be the best guess but proves wrong. What else could it be?

- In the Y3/4 text there are also three-letter words beginning with 'a' – of which some are 'and'. There is also a two-letter word beginning with 's' – likely to be 'so'.
5. Continue to develop the text in this way making predictions and electing to see all occurrences until there is plenty to work with. After this you may prefer not to take the 'Show all' option but to predict each individual letter.
6. If the children get really stuck it is possible to see all occurrences of a letter without first making a prediction. Select the letter at the bottom of the screen by clicking on it and then choose 'Show all'. Discourage children from using this option too much.
7. When the text has been fully developed draw attention to the patterns of rhyme, to the archaic words and structures in the riddle (livelong, wee, none too roomy) which mark it out as older. Ask children to solve the riddle if they have not already done so and read or give out copies of the last verse of the riddle poem which is not presented on the screen.

Activity 2 – Fictional prose

Learning objectives linked to NLS Word, Sentence and Text level work:

- to secure knowledge of question marks and exclamation marks in reading (Y3 T1 Sentence level work 6);
- the basic conventions of speech punctuation (Y3 T1 Sentence level work 7);
- to use the term 'speech marks' (Y3 T1 Sentence level work 8);
- how dialogue is presented in stories (Y3 T1 Text level work 2);
- to identify the common punctuation marks (Y4 T4 Sentence level work 2);
- to use the apostrophe to spell shortened forms of words (Y3 T2 Word level work 15);
- to recognise how certain types of text are targeted at particular readers, e.g. junior horror stories (Y4 T2 Text level work 9);
- to understand how dialogue is set out (Y5 T1 Sentence level work 7);
- to investigate the features of different fiction genres (Y5 T2 Text level work 9);
- to identify the key features of different types of literary text (Y6 T2 Text level work 7).

Year 3/4 – Sample 3

'I've had enough of this. I'm off!' Jenny cried. She was trembling all over.

'No we can't stop now we're nearly there!' I pleaded. 'Come on. We've got to go down.'

She pulled at my coat. 'Go down? Down there? You must be MAD?'

'Well, I'm going. We have to stick together,' I told her. 'Come on. Let's go.'

I shoved my torch in my pocket, grabbed hold of the rope and stepped out into the dark.

(Typical text from children's cliff-hanger story.)

Year 5/6 – Sample 4

As you wander around the house, an ear-piercing scream from Miss Jones makes you nearly jump out of your skin. 'What's the matter Miss Jones?' you cry, running up the stairs to meet her. 'You haven't seen a ghost up here have you?' To your great relief she looks a bit sheepish and shakes her head. 'No, it's not that,' she gasps. 'I just looked in the bathroom. There's a GIGANTIC spider in the bath!'

GO TO PAGE 134.

(Typical extract from an adventure game book.)

1. As with the poem, begin by discussing the layout and what this indicates about the text. Try to encourage pupils to identify some of the following features and thus make some hypotheses about the text. Try to avoid telling them at this stage whether their hypotheses are correct.

- Both passages are extracts with much direct speech, with questions and exclamations. The Y3/4 extract contains mainly short words and short sentences – suggesting that it is aimed at a young readership. The use of short sentences (and the word in capital letters – probably shouted) for dramatic effect could also be identified. The abbreviations (Let's, can't) as indicated by the apostrophes suggests speakers who are using language in a casual, informal way – these could possibly be children.
 - The last line from the Y5/6 extract is in capitals and ends in a number. Children familiar with the format of adventure game books may recognise this. Capital letters in the middle of sentences probably signify names.
2. Build up the text by predicting specific letters as with the poems.
- The single letter words in the Y3/4 extract are capitals this time – almost certainly 'I'. In the Y5/6 extract there is both 'a' and 'I'. The letters following the apostrophes are 's' and 't'.
 - In the Y5/6 text the 'M' of 'Miss' might be predicted.

3. When the text is well developed or completed, discuss the type of literature from which the extract is drawn and its appeal to the readership. The Y3/4 text is the conclusion to a chapter. A common feature

of this type of book is the use of a cliff-hanger at the end of each chapter to keep the reader engaged.

Activity 3 – Non-fiction

Learning objectives linked to NLS Sentence and Text level work:

- to notice differences in the style and structure of fiction and non-fiction writing (Y3 T1 Text level work 18);
- to compare the way information is presented (Y3 T1 Text level work 20);
- how written instructions are organised, e.g. lists, numbered points (Y3 T2 Text level work 14);
- to identify features of instructional texts (Y4 T1 Text level work 22);
- to read and evaluate a range of instructional texts (Y5 T1 Text level work 22);
- to read and evaluate letters (Y5 T3 Text level work 12);
- to review a range of non-fiction text types and their characteristics (Y6 T3 Text level work 19).

Year 3/4 – Sample 5

To Make a Pompon

You Need:— cardboard, wool, scissors

What You Do

- 1) Cut two circles of card 8cm across.
- 2) Cut a circular hole 2cm across in the centre of each card.
- 3) Put the cardboard rings together and wind the wool round the rings passing it through the hole in the centre until the hole is completely filled.
- 4) Cut the wool around the edges of the rings.
- 5) Tie a piece of wool between the rings and knot it tightly.
- 6) Take away the cardboard and fluff out the ball.

Year 5/6 – Sample 6

Dear Andrea,

I'm about to go into hospital to have my tonsils out. The doctor said that I have to have it done because I am so often ill with tonsillitis. I'm worried 'cause I've heard that after the operation you can't eat anything and you end up talking funny. Is this true?

Yours sincerely,
Helen, 10, London

1. As with the other types of text, begin by discussing what can be learned about the text by analysing the format. The Y3/4 text should be easy to recognise as a set of instructions or recipe of

some kind. The Y5/6 text has some features of a letter but no address or date. It is taken from an agony page in a magazine and follows a format some children may recognise.

2. Predict letters as before.

- The numbers in the 'recipe' could be measurements followed by gm, cm, etc. Predicting cm and then taking all occurrences of 'c' will be very helpful.
- If the Y5/6 text has been identified as a letter then 'Dear' and 'Yours sincerely' should be easy to predict. Alternatively start with 'I' or letters after apostrophes. The use of the first person is a further clue to a letter, as is the final question.

3. Again, once the text has been developed, discuss the genre of the text, its fitness for purpose and its match to audience.

Learning objectives for **all activities** linked to the National Curriculum Programme of Study for English at KS2:

During KS2 pupils . . . explore language in literary and non-literary texts and learn how language works.

Speaking and Listening – Range

3. The range of purposes for group discussion and interaction should include:

3b) planning, predicting, exploring

Skills

7. To talk effectively as members of a group pupils should be taught to:

7b) vary contributions depending on activity and purpose, including exploratory and tentative comments where ideas are being collected together and reasoned.

Learning objectives for **all activities** linked to NLS Sentence and Text level work:

- to use awareness of grammar to decipher new or unfamiliar words (Y3 T1 Sentence level work 1);
- to identify different types of text (Y4 T1 Text level work 16);
- to revise the language conventions and grammatical feature of the different types of text (Y6 T3 Sentence level work 1).

You can read more about *Tray* in 'Tray and Sherlock in the Literacy Hour' by Bob Fox which is in the MAPE Focus on Literacy, and also on the MAPE website (Curriculum – English). Unfortunately, Granada's version of *Tray* is no longer available, but all the activities can be carried out with:

Sherlock (Acorn Archimedes/A7000 etc. or PC Windows 3.1/Win '95/RM Window Box etc.) – £35.00 + VAT single user; £70.00 + VAT site licence. Available from Topologika Software, Waterside House, Falmouth Road, Penryn, Cornwall TR10 8BE. Tel: 01326 377771; Fax 01326 376755.

Stories from the Web

<http://hosted.ukoln.ac.uk/stories/>

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You know instinctively when something special is happening. That's just the feeling I had when I joined a session of 'Stories from the Web' at the Centre for the Child in Birmingham Central Library recently.

The concept of 'Stories from the Web' started in 1996, when it became evident that library services had to move with the times and make more of ICT resources in general, and the Internet in particular. The value of talking stories has long been recognised, and library staff in Birmingham noticed that the demand for interactive stories was enormous as parents and children discovered anew the pleasure of shared reading.

The UK Office for Library and Information Networking (UKOLN) had already experimented with using the Internet to develop children's literacy skills. Their Treasure Island website was hugely successful, and building upon this idea Stories from the Web, a research project, was born.

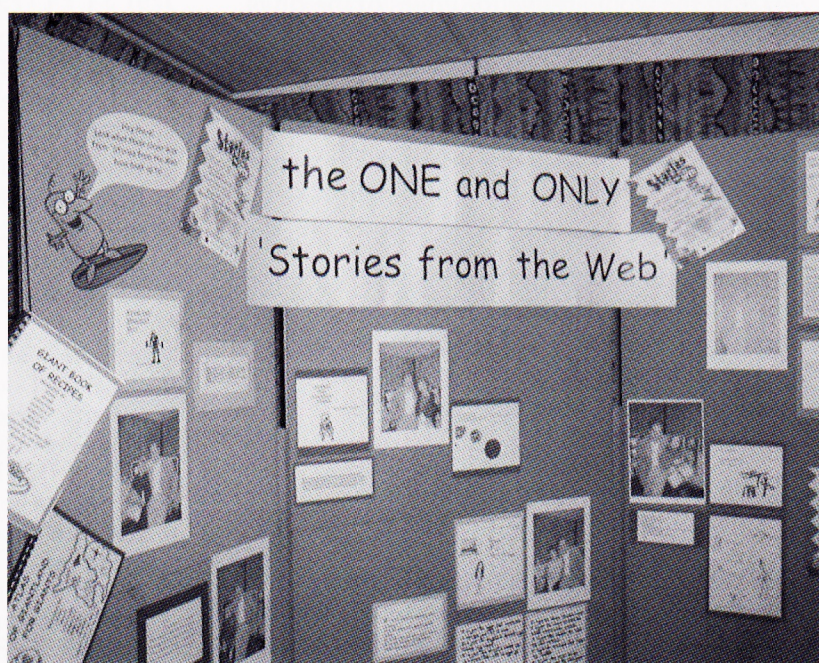
Although the main aim is to raise reading standards and nurture a love of literature among children there are other beneficial outcomes. Writing and reading are rightly seen as complementary skills, and both are developed, by encouraging children to publish their writing on the Internet. This requires children to develop new IT skills and children's achievements in this area are regularly monitored.

When the project was devised some considerable thought was given to a name. As it was neither just a book club nor a computer club, but activities drawing upon both, 'Stories from the Web' seemed an apt title.

At present there are three libraries in Britain – Leeds, Bristol and Birmingham – formally involved in the scheme; but don't make the mistake of thinking this is anything but a global project. Visitors from all over the world not only access the

site, but contribute. Currently the site is visited by more people from the USA than Britain, but as Lydia Matheson pointed out, this probably just reflects the greater availability of the Internet in America at present, and she confidently expects these figures to level out.

Stories from the Web library clubs are open to children between the ages of 8 and 11. As there are limited numbers of computers at the library, and to ensure that everyone has not only reasonable access to the technology, but also quality support from the library staff leading the sessions group, numbers are kept deliberately small. At the session I joined there were seven children, five girls and two boys. Lydia confirms that generally there has been a greater uptake of places by girls than boys. One might be tempted to think that any sort of club like this owes its success to its audience of already enthusiastic readers, but in fact this has not proved to be the case. The children who attend these sessions come from a range of backgrounds, and have a variety of interests. True, some of them are keen readers, but there are also children for whom reading and writing was a bit of a struggle. Simi-



larly there are members who have a high level of IT skills and those who have yet to develop them. Herein is one of the strengths of Stories from the Web; the atmosphere is relaxed, welcoming and mutually supportive, and within the security of this genuinely caring group of people confidence grows and real progress is made.

What might a typical session involve?

Sessions often begin with a story. Children then undertake various guided activities based upon the text. This usually involves writing of some sort. Children write direct to the computer, often using writing frames as a support. For example, when I joined in children had been celebrating 150 years of public libraries. They were encouraged to write about libraries of the past, the present, and to give their vision of libraries of the future.

Authors whose work is used on the Stories from the Web site are invited to attend the clubs and interact with the children who are members. This proves universally popular with the children, and there are photos of children taken with Laurence Anholt on a recent visit. Children are encouraged to access authors' websites and questions are asked and responded to by e-mail.

Publishers Forums are arranged to promote the site and give an opportunity for them to ask questions and both observe and talk to club members to hear their views.

The difficulties of how to start a story (See 'Where to begin' in MAPE Focus on Literacy Autumn 1998) are recognised and many authors have generously contributed starting sentences, paragraphs or even pages! Tips are given on structuring and characterisation too.

On-line logs are competed, recording what children have achieved in the session and what they would like to do next time. On Tuesday, one child's log recorded the fact that she'd like to meet another author next time! Children only submit their first names when they choose to do so.

How successful is the project?

By whatever criteria you use to judge success, this project must be classed as successful.

- Children (and parents) have had to make a commitment to the project. Regular attendance is necessary to develop the skills required to complete tasks. There is a waiting list for places. The children I met had all been coming regularly since last June.
- The library staff leading the sessions are so enthusiastic it is impossible not to be swept along with them.

- There is a growing enthusiasm for reading and writing. Children whose parents often select reading books for them are now expressing an interest themselves.
- There are clear achievements in terms of raised reading levels and in increased levels of IT skills among children and adults.
- There is an ongoing commitment from publishers and authors alike.

Support

Projects like this cannot run without financial support. Since its inception this project has been funded by the Library and Information Commission. This funding runs out in the very near future, and the team has submitted a bid for continued financial support from elsewhere.

It almost goes without saying that this type of venture will not succeed without the support of authors and publishers. Some of the former have made personal contact with the groups, and many of the latter have given permission for extracts from books to appear on the site free from royalties. It is perhaps not surprising that those publishers who have agreed to this have seen sales of the books rise quite considerably and, perhaps in part as a result of this, have pledged continuing support for the project.

What does the future hold?

Doreen Williams is optimistic, saying 'Stories from the Web has been a huge success and it is envisaged that the skills and commitment will continue to grow from the children, the staff, publishers and authors.'

Consultation with existing club members has shown that they are keen to continue learning new IT skills. This will mean continued training for staff involved to enable the children to be taught the skills required. With further IT skills the possibilities are endless, and soon the children will be encouraged to create their own web pages using software and hardware as required.'

This research project has provided a stimulating and worthwhile model for other libraries to emulate. It would seem to me that no one can lose.

For further information contact:

Doreen Williams (doreen.williams@dial.pipex.com) at The Centre for the Child, Birmingham Central Library, Chamberlain Square, Birmingham B3 3HQ
or Anne Everall, Director, Young Readers UK, (anne.everall@birmingham.gov.uk) at Literature Office, Birmingham Central Library, Chamberlain Square, Birmingham B3 3HQ

And visit the website at <http://hosted.ukoln.ac.uk/stories/>

The computer sequencer and music teaching

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A computer sequencer is a musical tool which enables a composer to put a series of sounds in order, to edit them, and to add accompaniments. These are common tools in the music business with composers using packages such as *Cubase* and *Sibelius* to produce tracks for records or scores for musicians. Some sequencers use a grid to place the sounds; some use conventional music notation. The computers they are installed on are likely to be linked to a keyboard via a Midi connection. In the same way, pupils can use simple sequencers to create music in the classroom. Usually these sequencer programs will be very simple, perhaps only creating one line of sound.

As reading and composing with notation is a relatively advanced skill, most children at KS2 will find a grid sequencer the easiest to manage, such as *Compose World* or *Music Box*. There are also notation-based sequencers such as *Notate*, but these require some formal musical literacy for effective use.

I have recently used both *Compose World* and *Music Box* with groups of Y3 children as a part of their music education, to see what they could get from the packages in terms of musical learning. We worked over a period of a lesson a week for half a term. *Compose World* is familiar to many teachers. Simple icons represent short musical phrases, which can be placed on a grid, replayed and edited. Some music teachers do not like *Compose World* as it can be used in a superficial manner, with little musical engagement. However, my aim was to use it as a teaching medium to enable children to compose and edit simple melodies, to engage musically and to perform with conventional instruments alongside it. I wanted to ensure it was a real composing tool. The school I was working in had a cluster of four Acorn computers outside the classroom where

we could work relatively undisturbed. I worked with groups of six pupils for half an hour each group. I provided headphones for use with each computer, so that the children could hear the full sound of the internal instruments on the computer. The rest of the class was involved in music at the same time with a student who was a music special-



Acorn computer cluster.

ist on her final teaching practice.

The first observation was to note the high level of motivation and engagement on behalf of the children. They thoroughly enjoyed the activities, concentrated well and experimented with the facilities of the program as far as I let them. From the first session, I noted that they were very keen to investigate the possibilities and make up music. They could sing along with their tunes and clap or move to the rhythms when they used percussion instruments available through the program. They listened to the individual phrases before placing them on the sequence. They then tried out alternative phrases to see how well they worked. They played with the different instruments available and listened to the tunes and rhythms. One child experimented with the speed, increasing it to 400 beats per minute (the standard setting is 93). He was impressed by this but immediately slowed it down again. Two girls in separate groups tried to fit words to the tunes to help remember them. One of them could sing a whole 4-bar phrase back to me, getting all the notes right. They could all sing back the individual tune phrases, at their own pitch (not all could sing in tune). They were all deeply involved musically, listening, remembering, hearing and singing the phrases they were using.

At the next session, I repeated what we had done the week before but showed them how to change the sets of tune phrases, and we talked about composition structure. I wanted them to get the

idea of a beginning, middle and a resolved ending. The children did not use these automatically, but most of them did find natural concluding phrases. They listened to the tune phrases and selected ones that resolved. One boy and one girl used ending phrases that left their tunes unresolved. They also added phrase repetition. They coped with these ideas well, but some of the tune phrases we used were too complex for them to remember.

The next time, working with only one group of children, I introduced them to the drum section of *Music Box*. This proved to be more difficult than I had anticipated. The software would not work on all the machines so the children had to share and there were problems with saving files. They learned to use the program to make a sequence of drum sounds, vary the speed, play and reverse the rhythms, but the program offered a lack of precision in placing so the patterns were not even. I found this frustrating, although the children did not. At first they put in lots of sounds, making a very busy, frenetic beat. I then asked them to leave lots of spaces, put a beat on the beat (marked by a vertical line on the program) and place some other sounds in between. This led to a better effect, although they struggled to put the sounds on the beat lines. They experimented with different instruments and had clear favourites.

To give some idea of structure, I then asked them to make a simple first line, make something different for the second line, and finish with a



Experimenting with Compose World.

repeat of the first line. They could do this effectively and it worked quite well. I gave them each a percussion instrument (tambourine or bongo drum) and asked them to play a simple beat over the rhythm they had created. This was difficult for them. I had to give them considerable help to overcome their coordination problems. I was not very satisfied with this session; I felt they had little control of their mental sense of rhythm. Upon reflection, perhaps I was expecting too much of them. They had little previous musical experience and no formal music skills. They did appear able to use the program, despite their lack of precision; they understood all the tools they needed to use and they could follow my instructions.

At the next session, the children worked in pairs, one on *Music Box* and one on *Compose World*. One child composed a melody; the other made up a rhythm pattern. I showed them how they could change the speeds, and make them coincide so that the drum pattern could accompany the tune. They listened to the tune and proceeded to make up patterns to fit. This worked surprisingly well; they counted themselves in to start playing together. Then I asked them to take an instrument from the trolley and play it alongside as an accompaniment. They did this, but were much less able to sustain a beat – they tended to play an irregular beat, as if their hands were a little behind their brains! I tried to record all their efforts, but the battery on the tape recorder went flat – so much for my skills with ICT!

At the final session I was only able to work with one group. The children had the choice of working with either *Compose* or *Music Box*; in the end they worked with both, swapping half way through the session. This session showed they had clearly learned ICT skills as well as musical skills. They could operate both programs with confidence. They had remembered all the basic commands, could select tune files in *Compose*, change instruments and change sections if they wanted to. They could loop the tunes, change speed and stop them. On *Music Box*, they could change instruments, play the rhythms, loop the rhythms and reverse them. They found this was a less satisfactory environment – they seemed to prefer the melodic aspects of *Compose*. To show they had been involved musically, I asked them to hum the tunes they had composed. They could do this with some confidence, although not all the notes were correct; they had a good idea of the pitch and rhythm of the tune. I asked them to clap the rhythms they had created in *Music Box*. They could do this to a certain

extent, but their rhythm patterns were not totally regular; this was less easy. Despite this, they were able to produce a fair approximation of the rhythm. I asked them how they had put their tunes together, and they were able to talk about listening to the sounds first, then using a beginning, a middle and an ending. One of them showed me how he worked – he tried changing the end section of his piece and he showed me how he selected a section that ended on the root note of the scale.

I taped their work and played it back to them. Both listening to their tunes and hearing their own voices fascinated them. They also tried to play and sing along with the tunes they had made up. Perhaps I should have started by getting them to use the tape recorder!

What have they learned from these sessions? Firstly, they showed that they had developed a competency with the software, and this could be further developed given more time. They were engaged musically, as can be shown by the ability to sing with the tunes they had composed, and clap the rhythms. They were exercising taste and judgement, listening to phrases, trying them out in combination and changing them if necessary. They showed they had some idea of a simple musical structure – start, change, and finish with a resolution.

My conclusions were that the exercise had been very successful, that simple sequencers can engage pupils very positively in musical activity, as well as developing ICT skills. However, the pupils had access to my supervision and support for the whole of the sessions; this might not be normal in a classroom situation. Secondly, I am a musician, and developed a clear idea of what was possible through the sessions. This might not be easy for a non-musician. However, I feel that this exercise has shown the computer sequencer to be a very positive tool for music teaching, (although not a replacement for conventional music activities) given adequate subject knowledge on behalf of the teacher and time to support the children.

Further reading

- The National Curriculum (1995) HMSO.
- The National Curriculum (1999) DFEE/QCA.
- Review of Software for Music (1997) BECTA.
- Music Curriculum Software Seminar (1999) BECTA.
- A. Pugh and L. Pugh. *Music in the Early Years* (1998) Routledge.
- S. Hennessy. *Coordinating Music across the Primary School* (1998) Falmer.

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Site Seeing

MAPE

The new-look MAPE website contains a selection of articles from past publications as well as information, news and some children's activities, including Internet Treasure Hunts, quizzes and ideas for using databases.

Schools

Ambleside C of E Primary School

www.ambleside.schoolzone.co.uk/ambleweb/index.htm

There are some excellent activities here, including some for the Literacy Hour, the Daily Maths Lesson, and others devised by the children themselves. Take a look at the Look, Cover, Write and Check.

Sutton-on-Sea County Primary School, Lincolnshire

<http://www.sutton.lincs.sch.uk/>

This site has a useful weather station. Don't just monitor and record the weather data where you are, submit it to Sutton-on-Sea who will add it to their database. To date 80 records are available including some from overseas schools.

Nettlesworth School

<http://atschool.eduweb.co.uk/nettsch>

There is a particularly good History section here written for children by children, covering several of the KS2 Study Units.

Maths

Maths Year 2000

www.mathsyear2000.org/

This is a lovely site, very varied in content so there should be something for everyone. It includes information, games, problems and puzzles, and a lovely museum site showing pictures of old mathematical equipment. There are also excellent links to other sites.

Bernard's Bag

<http://nrich.maths.org.uk/primary/apr00/bbag.htm>

This is such a rich resource it can never be recommended too often.

Maths Challenge

<http://mathschallenge.ngfl.becta.org.uk>

The new *Maths in Motion* program provides a national challenge for primary children.

Stories

FROM THE WEB

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surf the Net,
or would
you like to?



Are you aged
between 8 and 11?

Do you enjoy reading
stories and poems?



Then Join
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