

# MAPE Newsletter

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Spring Term 2002

Newman College with MAPE

## MAPE Writers' Conference

MAPE hosted a writers' conference at Honiley Court Hotel and Conference Centre, between 26 and 28 October 2001, with the aim of producing materials for forthcoming publications. Over the course of the weekend there were at least 25 delegates, some there from start to finish, others for just a day. It was particularly pleasing that so many new contributors came along. New friendships were forged as people got together to work on similar ideas, and old acquaintanceships renewed. Pat McLean did her first teaching practice in Carole Farr's class and they have not seen each other since!

The original plan was to invite contributors to write for three publications. Eventually only people writing for the revised Owl Pack and Modern Foreign Languages were involved.

The weekend began with drinks and dinner on the Friday evening; this was followed by a short introduction during which the objectives of the weekend were outlined.

I seemed to spend much of the night listening out, in vain, for the little owl that Janice Staines assured me she had seen nearby.

After breakfast on Saturday a brief discussion clarified what everyone intended to cover during the weekend; this ensured that there would be no duplication of efforts. Alan and Angella demonstrated the new version of the *Lost Owls* program before everyone got down to work on their chosen theme. A quiet but productive hum provided further evidence, should any be needed, that the weekend was going to be a success. The hotel staff voiced some concern that 'it was all very intense' and 'are

you all right?' as one writer took the chance of a breath of fresh air. Presumably, they are used to 'conferences' of a different nature.

The fact that the clocks went back on Saturday night confused some people as the digital display on the TV sets in our rooms automatically changed. Carole can testify to this, she watched it happen. One nameless delegate slept in and I wondered when coffee would arrive, to be reminded that it was only 9.30!

We finished the morning by summarising what had been completed and what remained to be done. It was important to make sure that no one left feeling that they had been given too much 'home-work'. So much enthusiasm for the projects meant there was a risk that we would become too adventurous. We needed to be brought back down to earth from time to time with reminders that we are not programmers and MAPE does not have a huge budget for publications.

So much was achieved during the course of the weekend that the event seems to have been a great success. You must now wait until the publications appear and judge for yourselves.

Whether future writers' conferences are possible or not remains to be seen. The weekend was hugely expensive, but against that it was a success from several points of view:

- For many it was professional development,
- MAPE, we hope, has found some new contributors, perhaps even new members,
- Everyone enjoyed it.



# *The Story Teller* CD-ROM

Some members have had difficulty running this software direct from the CD-ROM.

If you have *Textease* installed on your computer:

1. Put the *Story Teller* CD-ROM in the drive.
2. Open *Textease*.
3. Click on the open folder icon to load a file.
4. Select the drive for the CD.
5. Click Start.te OK

If you get an error message saying that you have an older version of *Textease*, install the browser and follow these instructions.

If you do not have an up-to-date version of *Textease* installed on your computer.

1. Install the browser from the first screen of the CD-ROM, make a note of its location.
2. If, when you click on the Browser button, nothing happens, leave the CD-ROM in the drive, then locate the folder where the browser is installed (usually Start, Programs)
3. Double click on the browser icon to open it.
4. **Either** click File, Open **or** left click the open folder icon.
5. Locate the drive containing the CD and click to list the files.
6. Double click Start.te
7. Click on the *Story Teller* icon in the middle of the screen to get the menu.

Dear MAPE,

ESP would like to apologise for the problems some people are having with the MAPE *Story Teller* CD-ROM. There appears to have been a problem somewhere between final testing and the pressing of the CD-ROM which has meant that the pages do not always start up correctly.

We have put an alternative startup program on our website at

<http://www.ESPMusic.co.uk/support.htm>

which can be downloaded and installed onto a PC. This will hopefully provide easy access to the *Textease* pages on the CD-ROM. The only limitation in this fix is that the CD-ROM needs to be in the D drive when you run the application.

Please let ESP know directly if you continue to have problems with this:

<mailto:sale@ESPMusic.co.uk>

There is some support for Mac users on the CD-ROM in the form of a ZIP file which can be uncompressed onto the Mac hard disc and run from there. *Textease* is available for the Mac and the browser freely downloadable from the *Textease* site.

The *Sezoo* materials on the CD-ROM are not currently available in a Mac version; however, they are written in *FileMaker* and so could be made available for Mac. If there is enough interest in a Mac version of the CD then we would be happy to produce a Mac version.

We do apologise again for problems encountered with this CD-ROM and assure you of ESP's commitment to fixing any outstanding issues with this product. I do hope MAPE members will enjoy the excellent materials on the CD-ROM.

Yours,  
Andy Pierson



# ICT in the Literacy Hour: whole class teaching

This is the latest support material from the DfES, and unlike the National Numeracy Strategy pack, this is a very slim offering indeed. Almost everything is contained on the CD-ROM itself.

When put in the drive the CD auto-runs, and checks whether or not necessary plug-ins, for example *Quick Time*, are installed.

Following a short introduction the user has the option to look at: -

- What's it all about?
- What do I need?
- How do I get there?

## What's it all about?

This section gives some useful ideas about how ICT can be used in whole class teaching and the means by which ICT can support and enhance learning in shared reading, whole class work at word and sentence level as well as in shared writing. It goes on to identify the ways in which ICT can make teaching and learning easier, better and different.

There is advice for headteachers, too, on how they can support the use of ICT in literacy lessons. One particular quote is memorable.

'ICT is beginning to be used to support and enhance at least 20% of literacy teaching in all classes, with an emphasis, in the first instance on whole class elements of the literacy hour.'

## How should I get there?

This is the core of the CD-ROM, containing the video clips and lesson commentaries. There is one clip for each year group, featuring different aspects of literacy hour lessons and a range of equipment. Although some of these clips do feature cutting-edge technology, others make do with systems that can be found in any school,

proving that you do not need the height of sophistication to integrate ICT imaginatively and successfully into your literacy hour teaching.

There are seven clips on the CD:

- In the **Reception** class the teacher is using a standard computer and monitor for SHARED READING.
- An interactive whiteboard is used in **Year 1** for whole-class WORD LEVEL WORK.

## The National Literacy Strategy

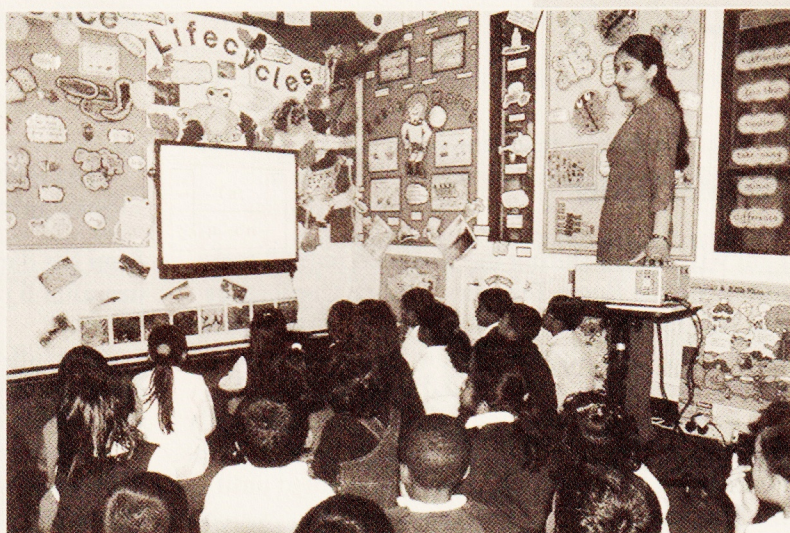
### ICT in the Literacy Hour: Whole Class Teaching

Guidance

Curriculum & Standards

Headteachers,  
Teachers and  
Practitioners in  
Reception, KS1  
& KS2

Status: Recommended  
Date of issue: 09/01  
Ref: DfES 0620/2001



department for  
education and skills  
creating opportunity, releasing potential, achieving excellence

Raising  
Standards  
Standards and Effectiveness Unit

Excellence  
in schools



- The **Year 2** teacher uses a laptop computer with data projector for SHARED WRITING.
- A standard computer with large monitor being used for SHARED READING in a **Year 3** class.
- In **Year 4**, Elizabeth Furness demonstrates how to use a standard computer with data projector, remote keyboard and mouse in a SHARED WRITING task.
- In the clip from **Year 5** you can find out how a teacher uses a laptop computer with data projector to teach whole-class SENTENCE LEVEL WORK.
- The final clip shows us a **Year 6** class in a computer suite using a word processing program to condense text by making notes for SHARED READING and WRITING.

Also contained within this section you will find further short video clips of teachers talking about their lessons. In my opinion, these are too short to make a real contribution to teachers' understanding of the issues.

#### What do I need?

The final section of the CD-ROM contains written information (pdf files) on the different options

available, including interactive whiteboards and projectors, remote keyboards and mice and the Viglen class link as seen in the Year 6 video clip.

I have no doubt that this CD-ROM could prove of immense value in demonstrating the opportunities that ICT affords to pupils in Literacy Hour, and will be a real benefit to those who need to plan and deliver training sessions in school. I do think that there could have been more emphasis on what can be achieved with less expensive equipment; only two of the featured lessons used the sort of equipment available to all, and this might play into the hands of the Luddites.

Clearly, in condensing everything onto one CD-ROM, compromises have had to be made. What I saw was interesting and imaginative, but I wanted to see so much more of each classroom activity.

Perhaps the final words should be left to the contents of the CD-ROM; on one of the early screens is the sentence that should be written large as part of every school's policy.

**'ICT in literacy is an entitlement for all children.'**

*The National Literacy Strategy ICT in the Literacy Hour: Whole Class Teaching* (ref: DfES 0620/2001) can be obtained from

DfES Publications

Tel: 0845 60 22260; Fax: 0845 60 33360;

e-mail: dfes@prolog.uk.com

## Becta's Online Conference – how was it for me?

### Veronica Carter

I am writing this during the weekend immediately following the Becta Teachers' Online Conference and Exhibition so it is very much my 'first impressions'. My overriding feeling is that it was just getting interesting and why did it have to stop?

I looked in over the first two days but was really waiting for Heather Govier's seminar on ICT in the Foundation Stage, which wasn't timetabled until the Thursday. In fact it was the timetabling which was my greatest problem. I am a full-time class teacher. That Thursday I had someone coming to see me at lunch time and so just managed to get to the conference, scan Heather's seminar and its discussion and make a quick contribution. After school I had a meeting scheduled with my student teacher and then had to leave to fetch my daughter

from her dark and lonely bus stop. I got home at just after 6 p.m. at which time all the fun seemed to be over!

As a full-time early years practitioner I felt I had been effectively precluded from joining in with this worthwhile event.

A contribution to the discussion did appear on Friday and so I tried making one on the Saturday. Presumably there was no moderator available over the weekend as it did not appear until Monday and by then the momentum had gone. The message that, by then, appeared on logging into the conference stated 'Have you read the Interactive Seminar Discussions?' which did not make it sound like something they planned as an ongoing discussion, being distinctly in the past tense.



I am left wondering, having put all that effort into getting this event to happen, and having got quite a bit of momentum going, why did it all have to grind to a halt? It is notoriously difficult to get teachers involved in discussion forums; this event overcame such difficulties but did not seem to want to cash in on its own success.

From my point of view it has certainly been a success in spite of the frustrations discussed above. Heather's seminar was fascinating and thorough, full of useful links, which I have already looked through and am beginning to make use of in the classroom. Through the discussion I have 'met' others actively involved in developing ICT in Early Years settings and am hoping to build on this initial contact.

I found items of interest elsewhere on the conference too. I was left wondering what was the essential difference between a workshop and a seminar as no matter what format the initial stimulus for the discussion took, the important part seemed to be the ensuing debate, which was identical in appearance. There again, as it was happening live it also had the feel of a chat room discussion.

I have no understanding of the technology behind all these different ways of interacting on the Internet but following this Online Conference I wonder just how distinct they all are and just how are they likely to develop as we develop our understanding of what does and does not work for us.

## Discloze

**Betty Lumley**

*betty.lumley@talk21.com*

If you have visited the MAPE website and used *Discloze* you will realise what a useful program it is. Like me you may want to make scripts of your own.

After two frustrating hours and many false starts I was forced to email and ask friends who knew more about the inner workings of computers than I did.

Now, using their expertise, I have mastered the art and think is really quite simple! So I thought I would try to translate this into a straightforward procedure.

### 10 steps to your own scripts

1. Visit [www.mape.org.uk/kids/index.htm](http://www.mape.org.uk/kids/index.htm) and download 'my\_discloze' from 'Making your own scripts'.
2. Unzip it to 'desktop' or 'my documents' where it will be easy to find.
3. Open 'my\_discloze' folder.
4. Open 'scripts' folder. Samples 1–4 give different layouts. Choose the script version you want – say 'sample3'.

All subsequent steps assume you are using Sample 3. If you choose to use one of the other samples make the appropriate alterations.

5. Open 'sample3' in a Text Editor e.g. *Notepad*.
6. Change 10th line `title="sample3"` to `title=""` – type your title between the speech marks.
7. Change 11th line `text[1]="This example script ....."` to `text[1]=""` – type your text between the speech marks.

(I found putting the text in as a continuous line with '/' to indicate a new line easiest but proved less convenient when making corrections.)

8. Change 12th line `letters="xm"` to `letters=""` – type the letters you want to omit between the speech marks without spaces.
9. This new file **must** be saved with an **htm** extension otherwise it will not work in *Explorer*.
10. Open the menu from 'scripts' folder in *Notepad*.
11. Change 3rd line `cheading="heading3"` to `cheading=""` – type your heading between the speech marks.
12. Change 7th line `c1="sample3.htm,Sample 3"` to `c1=".htm,"` – insert the file name you chose in 9 above.

More new titles can be added by inserting a  
6th line `a2=".....htm,....."`  
7th line `a3=".....htm,....."`

If you wish existing headings and titles to be removed take out the content between the “ – **do not** delete anything else.

13. This file must be saved as `menu.js`
14. Click on 'index' in the my\_discloze folder and all should be OK.

There are many other things you can 'meddle' with using the instructions from the web but this is enough to get something that will work quickly.

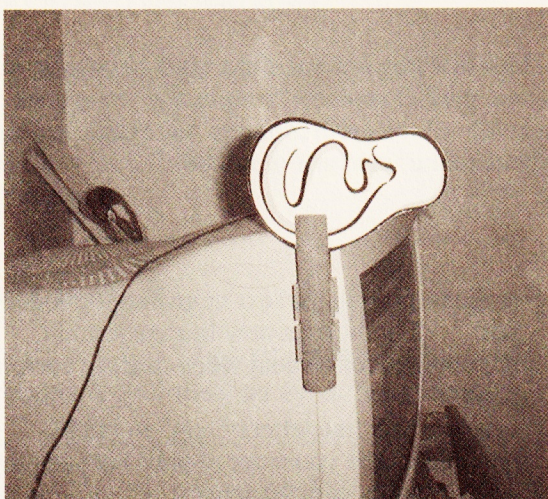


## Selections from some catalogues

Here are just a few examples of items in some of the recent catalogues I have received.

Within the *TTS Active ICT* catalogue there is a variety of books, software and other equipment that ranges from the exceptionally useful to the plain gimmicky. A useful set of ten A4 laminated cards, costing £6.99, shows some of the more common document icons, including open, new and save, as well as some displaying formatting styles, bold, underline, italic, etc.

Looking for somewhere to hang your head-



phones when not in use? Then perhaps this wooden ear that attaches to the side of the monitor with grab tabs is just what you need. I-Head costs £3.95.

You can also choose from two digital cameras, one costing £39.95 and the other £89.95. I have just had occasion to telephone TTS to order a camera. They could not have been more helpful and, as the camera was in stock, promised delivery within 2–3 working days.

To obtain a copy of the *TTS Active ICT* catalogue (other catalogues are available) telephone 0800 318686 or go to [www.tts-group.co.uk](http://www.tts-group.co.uk). All prices exclude VAT and delivery.

*TAG's* latest catalogue contains a huge range of software for every age group, covering all areas of the curriculum. Between its covers, you can browse for digital still and video cameras (£129.95) and a computer sound morpher to enhance your multimedia presentations (£49.95). You will also find a computer microscope (reviewed elsewhere in this publication), a graphics tablet and a mimio whiteboard, all very competitively priced. You can contact TAG by telephone on 01474 357 350, or at [www.taglearning.com](http://www.taglearning.com)

If you have the video camera or sound morpher would you consider reviewing it for MAPE? Please e-mail me at [rhona.dick@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:rhona.dick@blueyonder.co.uk).

## Transforming writing

**Lyn Jones**

*School Assistant at Woodfield Junior School*

Jonathan, now in Year 6, came from an infant assessment unit into the Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) Unit at Woodfield Junior School as a Year 3 pupil. He has cerebral palsy, to the extent that he is unable to walk steadily, which will not improve as he gets older. He has virtually no fine motor skills. Amongst his difficulties he had lost all of his milk teeth at a very early age, and so found speech difficult. This meant that a crucial part of his ability to spell by sounding out words was almost lost to him from the age of three. He needed a slope to sit on, and a slope to write at, to try to improve his posture and thus his ability to co-ordinate his movements just to write with a

pencil. He was aware of the alphabet, although obviously his spelling was poor, and his reading was adequate, if a little slow. The main problem was actually physically writing. The writing was often unevenly sized and took him a very long time to do.

First of all, after we had completed further assessments, we discovered that he was not, in fact, MLD as we had been led to believe. His intelligence was actually equivalent to that of his peers in the year group, and in Year 4 he moved into a mainstream class for maths. By Year 5 he was integrated into 75% of the mainstream school timetable. However, he still had severe problems



recording information in lessons, which left him far behind other class members. We then thought it might be possible for Jonathan to record his information on a laptop, and called in the ICT representative from Liverpool Social Services who did indeed agree that a wordprocessor would be an excellent aid and agreed to provide one. However, the laptop was ugly, old and heavy, and eventually Jonathan became very disillusioned with it. The laptop needed to be plugged into the mains so Jonathan could not sit by his friends and always had to be seated near a socket. Eventually Jonathan would not use it when he was in a mainstream class. He always knew where to come to for support with even the simplest of tasks like tying his shoe laces (which he will never be able to do) so he came to tell us about his problems with the wordprocessor and he returned intermittently to the unit to learn to use the equipment.

At the beginning of Year 6, the unit staff, having looked at many options, decided that an Alpha Smart laptop computer was the answer, as its style, colouring, image and, significantly, its weight meant that it was much more suitable for Jonathan as a typical 10-year-old lad. The machine had to be

bought with school funds. With the new laptop, Jonathan can sit anywhere in the class as it can be charged up in advance. At the end of each lesson, or day, whichever he prefers, he can just plug it into the PC in school and print out his work. This has made a dramatic difference to Jonathan, who now works at the pace of the other children. He has gone from a child who was deeply unhappy and frustrated, to one who is confident and able to hold his own in all areas requiring writing. Obviously he still has problems. He is now beginning to find maths difficult, as he cannot physically draw straight lines, angles and so on, but at least he now feels that the quality of his written work reflects his ability and intelligence, rather than his physical difficulties. As he says:

‘It [the Alpha Smart] helped me to keep up with the class in English, Science and History because I could type faster than I could write.’

Jonathan will be able to use his Alpha Smart for both the English and Science SATs.

P.S. Any suggestions for maths would be gratefully received!

## Laptops – a cautionary tale

**Ken Holmes**

*I.C.T. Co-ordinator, Dorrington Primary School, Birmingham*

At Dorrington we have a wireless system. We can use laptops to access our Server and the Internet from anywhere in the school, including the playground, without the need for them to be plugged in. In effect we have a mobile computer suite.

We initially purchased 16 Toshiba 4010 CDS Satellite Pros, which contain Lo-ion batteries. We use them as follows:

8.00–9.00 a.m. batteries put on charge  
 9.00–10.35 a.m. used by classes on battery power  
 10.35–11.00 a.m. batteries put on charge  
 11.00–12.00 a.m. used by classes on battery power  
 12.00–1.15 p.m. batteries put on charge  
 1.15–2.20 p.m. used by classes on battery power  
 2.20–2.35 p.m. batteries put on charge  
 2.35–3.35 p.m. used by classes on battery power

During the 3 years we have been doing this we have found it very rare for a battery to go down during lesson time.

Due to the success of the project, we decided last January to purchase more laptops. We bought

Toshiba 1640 CDTs containing nickel metal hydride batteries. This was, as we have found, a grave mistake; the batteries are constantly failing during lessons, which is frustrating for children and a nightmare for teachers.

The problem is that the nickel batteries have to completely run down before they can be charged up and putting them on charge before this time reduces their life and can cause them to lose their charge rather than charge up. In contrast, Lo-ion batteries can be charged at any time.

My advice to educational establishments who wish to purchase laptops is to make sure that they contain Lo-ion batteries whether for a ‘wireless’ network, AAL, or just for use by children in lessons. Laptops containing Lo-ion batteries, of whichever make, cost a bit more but are less heartache.

I hope this advice proves helpful to colleagues. Anyone requiring further information can contact me at Dorrington Primary School, Dorrington Road, Birmingham B42, or e-mail me at [ken.holmes@dorrington.bham.sch.uk](mailto:ken.holmes@dorrington.bham.sch.uk)



# Learning with Technologies in School, Home and Community

**An international working conference organised by IFIP Working Group 3.5 on Informatics and Elementary Education – 30th June–5th July 2002, Manchester, UK**

**Hosted by the Institute of Education, Manchester Metropolitan University**

This conference will build on previous work in promoting creativity and excellence in the use of ICT in education over the last two decades. IFIP Working Conferences bring together leading international professionals and researchers to exchange knowledge and engage critically with current issues of importance for policy and practice. There is an emphasis on building partnerships and developing strategies for improving the effectiveness of ICT in education across different national contexts.

The 2002 Manchester Conference will focus on learning with technologies in school, home and community. The rapid increase in the uptake of the Internet and a range of other technologies (mobile telephones, DVDs, digital TV, portable WAP-enabled devices and interactive whiteboards) is a worldwide phenomenon, despite economic and social differences between countries and socio-economic groups.

The conference will give the opportunity to explore the social contexts of learning with technologies, including the impact of youth culture on informal, exploratory learning in out-of-school environments, and developments in pedagogy and the management of learning within the school and other formal settings. Its focus will include ways of dealing with the 'digital divide' between the 'haves and have nots' in access to technologies, and in particular the potential for digital technologies to transform the educational opportunities for children in socially disadvantaged communities and developing countries.

## Conference programme

The conference programme has been designed to maximise opportunities for knowledge sharing and dialogue. Each day will begin with a keynote presentation and end with an 'open forum' to review key issues and provide opportunities for discussion. There will also be sessions for the

presentation and discussion of papers. The social programme has been planned to maximise opportunities for extended debate and the planning of future work among international partners.

An 'Educators' Day', to be held on Tuesday 2 July 2002 at Manchester Metropolitan University, will provide the opportunity to explore the conference themes with local school leaders, advisors and teachers and get feedback on differences between the approaches to learning with technologies in different countries

## Conference fee

The rate per person for the whole conference will be £350, and will include:

- Detailed daily programmes
- Conference papers (including bound abstract papers)
- Book published by Kluwer & postage
- Participation in all working sessions
- Lunch and refreshments (Monday to Friday)
- Welcome Reception (Monday) Evening Buffet (Tuesday)
- Tatton Park Stately Home, evening dinner and transport (Wednesday)
- Manchester city maps, places to visit, what's on guides

A daily rate of £90 is also available.

Optional extras include three additional evening meals offering an international range of cuisine.

## Accommodation

Accommodation **is not** included in the conference fee. Lists of hotels and booking information are available on the conference website.

<http://www.did.stu.mmu.ac.uk/conference/conferences.shtml>



# Reviews

## Hardware

### Intel Play QX3 Computer Microscope

The Intel Play QX3 Computer Microscope, which won an award at BETT in 2001, magnifies at 10, 60 or 200 times and displays images directly onto a computer screen. Specimens can be lit from below as with a standard microscope (useful for prepared slides) or from above. This allows it to be used rather like a hand-lens to examine minibeasts, for example. The microscope can be mounted on the stand provided, or the imaging head can be hand-held for close up exploration in tricky places. The software that comes with the microscope can be used to capture still images (i.e. to take photographs of the specimens) or to record short sections of video. It is also possible to make time-lapse movies and slide shows and to perform all sorts of special effects on the images, which can then either be printed directly or exported to any desktop publishing package. Containers, tweezers and sample slides are supplied with the device along with a clear and attractive handbook. A Teachers' Resource Pack is also available.

For primary school use the  $\times 10$  magnification is likely to be most useful, as focusing is tricky at higher magnifications. We used it to look at pond life and take close-up photos ( $\times 10$ ) of the creatures we found there. These were then incorporated into our write-up work. We also looked at growths of mould on bread and made a time-lapse film of mould growing under ideal (warm, damp) conditions.

The Intel Play QX3 Computer Microscope is available from TAG Learning Limited, 25 Pelham Road, Gravesend, KENT DA11 0HU; Tel: 01474 537 886; Fax: 01474 332 667; Price: £89.95.

It can be purchased on-line at [www.taglearning.com/](http://www.taglearning.com/)

For further information contact Alyson Morris on 01474 537886 or at [A.Morris@taglearning.com](mailto:A.Morris@taglearning.com)

*Heather Govier*

## Software

### MicroSMILE Ratio

This latest software from MicroSMILE consists of four games based on ratio. As appears so often to be the case these days, this CD-ROM comes without any paper documentation; everything is

contained on the CD. The pdf files provide a teachers' manual and classroom materials to supplement the games. Included within the classroom materials are some very attractive posters demonstrating ratio by using mathematical shapes. There is plenty of scope here for pupils to create their own.

### *The games*

**Paint Mix** consists of two games for one or two players.

In the first game, players must mix two colours of paint in a specified ratio to produce a given volume of paint; there are only four different quantities of paint that can be added at each turn. Three points are awarded to the player who fills the container. The winner of the game is the first player to reach 10 points.

In the second game, players must aim to create a paint mix of a given ratio, rather than a given quantity. In both games there are two levels of difficulty. An animated explanation appears if errors are made, and the opposing player is awarded one point.

**Money Spin**, a game for one or two players, has only one level of difficulty. A random number of pound coins is generated and players must aim to divide the coins in different ratios. The numbers 1 to 9 (only one of each) are dragged to boxes to create up to four ratios. I did have a problem when I was told to share £2. One point is awarded for each correct ratio created, and the game is over when one player reaches ten points.

**Ratio Match** is a three in a line game for one or two players. There are two levels of difficulty.

These three games are all suitable for pupils at Key Stage 2. The final game is aimed at Key Stage 3 and above, but it could be used with more able top juniors.

**Ratio Buster.** Do you remember Blockbusters on TV? In this game, for one or two players, but which is much more exciting with two, the players aim to cross the hexagonal board by selecting numbers in turn. After selecting a number, the player is asked a ratio question; for example, the ratio of Tom's money to Lynne's money is 4:2; Tom has £16 – how much does Lynne have? Players must type in the answer. Do not be deceived, the example I have given is quite straightforward, but some do involve fractional parts of pounds.



### General features

The toolbar at the top provides various options for teachers and pupils. In *some* games, for example *Ratio Match*, turning on the sound icon means that pupils can hear the required ratios spoken. At the end of a game the winner is rewarded with claps and cheers. Icons enable you to toggle between one and two players and another provides brief instructions. One nice touch is the 'copy screen' feature that in conjunction with the notepad, a common feature of many MicroSMILE programs, allows pupils to give written explanations of their reasoning. In fact, although this program principally targets ratio don't forget the Problem Solving element of Maths that is also covered here.

This is another top quality product from SMILE Mathematics; I thoroughly recommend it.

MicroSMILE *Ratio* costs £30 for a single user, a licence for 2–15 users is £60, 16–50 users will cost £90, and a licence for more than 50 users is £120.

The program is available from SMILE Mathematics, Isaac Newton Centre, 108a Lancaster Road, London W11 1QS; Tel: 020 7598 4841; Fax: 020 7598 4838; e-mail: [info@smilemathematics.co.uk](mailto:info@smilemathematics.co.uk); web: [www.smilemathematics.co.uk](http://www.smilemathematics.co.uk)

Rhona Dick

### ***Mouse in the House* by d2 digital – £9.99**

This piece of software is amazing in its simplicity and effectiveness. It is ideally suited to Years 3–5 and its boast to make 'learning fun' is certainly true.

I have used it in a nursery and home situation and, in each setting, the children have been totally absorbed. In the home it was used in preference to their daily dose of 'Tweenies'. Their comments revealed they had made judgements built on previous knowledge, and learnt specific skills.

The disc consists of a 'Find the mouse' activity and five games in a toy box. Choices are made by moving a large arrow which changes colour when active as noted by one child saying 'it's no use pressing now it's not blue'. Leaving a game involves choosing yes or no written under a cat which is nodding yes or no and accompanied by the words 'do you want to stop playing'. Again, these little subtleties of nodding heads were noted by the children, 'That's how you can tell it says No'.

The commentary is very simple; words are matched to pictures and actions. Male and female voices are used; phrases like 'Oh no', 'Not this time', 'Sorry' sound very friendly and encouraging.

Find the mouse involves looking in all the rooms of a house; when the child clicks on an object the voice says 'under the mat' and all position prepositions are introduced.

The five games introduce skills of colour matching, phonic sounds in 3-letter words, pairs game, number recognition and shape matching. All these have three levels of difficulty. Again there is a simple commentary that gives meaning to what the children are doing. Educationally these activities are spot on.

D2digital have a web site – [www.themouseclub.co.uk](http://www.themouseclub.co.uk), which has many more excellent activities; they can be downloaded if you join, free at time of writing. The activities are all at three levels of difficulty and include mazes, hide and seek, stories, make a card, dot to dot and a page for adults.

The pages do take quite a time to load but there is a large bee to watch going along a scale and the children didn't seem to mind the wait.

This company has produced an attractive, reasonably priced product and seems to really understand the educational needs of the under fives.

I have taught Foundation and Key Stage one for over thirty years and have rarely found anything as suitable as this program.

Betty Lumley

## Books

### **The Internet in School (2nd ed.)**

Author: Duncan Grey

Publisher: Continuum Books

This book addresses those in schools who are responsible for children's and teachers' use of the Internet. There is a great deal of practical advice and Duncan Grey manages to clarify many of the management decisions, especially the ethical decisions, involved in setting up systems which access the Internet. Obstacles to Internet use are dealt with early in the book and are followed by useful sections on choosing browsers and setting up an Intranet.

This book was written out of experience in a secondary school. However, the advice about children using e-mail or on making policies and guidelines for 'acceptable use' would be useful to ICT co-ordinators in primary education. There are suggestions about expanding the Internet experience of teachers with low technology skills and some suggestions for the way projects can be tackled using the Internet as a resource. A useful chapter on research skills outlines an approach to teaching 'finding out' and another deals with publishing on the Internet.

I enjoyed the asides and jargon-free style. *The Internet in School* would be a useful reference source for the ICT manager.

Mary Lou Thornbury



**The Second European Conference on Information Technology in Education and Citizenship** will take place in between 26 and 28 June 2002 in Barcelona.

Featuring key presentations from international academics on a range of educational issues, there is something here to interest everyone involved in education.

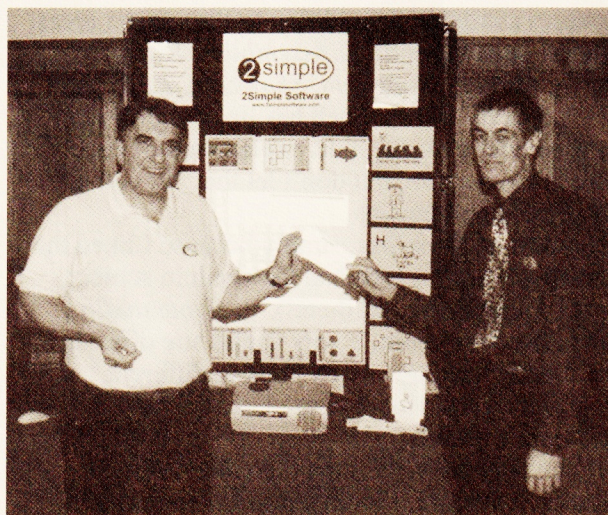
More information and details about registration can be found at  
<http://web.udg.es/tiec/ang/principalne.htm>

## PRESS RELEASE

### THE I.C.T. ROADSHOW AWARDS 2001

During 2001, Cambridgeshire Software House has been taking an ICT Show for teachers around the U.K. The last one of the year was recently held in Dumfries. Each Show has involved about 30 companies being available to demonstrate their products to teachers in a relaxed atmosphere, away from the hustle and bustle of the bigger shows.

Throughout the year CSH has been running an exit poll amongst the visitors, asking them to vote for the company who they considered to have the 'most friendly, helpful and informative' stand at the Show. Brian Richardson presented the winner's cheque for £250 to Martin Burnett, ICT Consultant of 2Simple Software. 2Simple, who donated their prize to Childline, started producing software for early years just 14 months ago and have obviously made an impact with teachers. Nigel Canin, 2Simple's Managing Director, said 'we are so pleased to have won this award as it has been voted for by teachers actually attending the ICT Roadshows. This means that our customers are appreciating what we are trying to do in producing quality software for young children that is relevant to what they do and understand.'



The ICT Roadshow has, this year, visited Stockport, Barry, Gateshead and Dumfries. Brian Richardson said, 'We started to organise the Shows simply because many of the smaller software houses like ourselves cannot afford to go to the big Exhibitions without having to increase our prices substantially to cover the costs. We thought that schools would not want us to do this so we decided to take our products to our customers rather than the other way round. The ICT Roadshows have been very well received by the LEAs that have worked with us and there will be four more next year, the first being in Reading in March.'

Further information is available from: Brian Richardson, Cambridgeshire Software House; Tel: 01487 741223; Fax: 01487 741213.



# The TagTeacherNet website – [www.tagteacher.net](http://www.tagteacher.net)

**Judy Sayers**

*Maths Coordinator at Codicote School, Hertfordshire*

If you don't know of TagTeacherNet, or have never visited their site take a look, it could be just what you've always wanted in a website. It's almost like being in an exclusive club.

## So what is on the site?

As its title suggests, TagTeacher is for teachers. They recommend you sign up as a member otherwise some of the key features, including Resources, will not be available to you.

There are several main areas on the site including: Resources, News, Jobs, Shops and Support.

## Resources

At the time of writing there are twenty areas of resources available. In addition to the subject areas, there are sections entitled *Assemblies*, *Exams*, *Drama*, *Careers*, *Suppliers*, *Showcase*, *P.S.E.*, and one on *Special Needs*. Each has links to different websites with a useful short explanation of each. Some are American, but don't let that put you off, they are of good quality.

I looked at *Showcase*, simply because I liked the title and it wasn't a National Curriculum subject. (Gosh! There *is* life out there!). In *Hyperstudio* I found **Discovery.com**, a very useful site offering free clipart. There are many clips in different categories to download; your class will have a great time with this.

In the *Special Needs* area there are different sections to explore, I looked into *Classroom* and *Curriculum Support* and was transported straight to the **Teachers Library of Resources**. I have come across this one before; it's a good site to have on your favourites page.

As a Maths specialist I had to check out the *Maths* area. When I got to there, I was frustrated; most of the sites I found seemed to focus on the Key Stage 3 and GCSE levels.

I looked in the 'lessons' category and found myself at [Mathslessons.co.uk](http://Mathslessons.co.uk) but again nearly all were KS3 and GCSE level. However, they looked good resources, and some may be appropriate for upper Key Stage 2. I did find a Primary Maths site, one of the best I've seen called **teachingtime.co.uk** – some lovely sheet resources as well as interactive screens, not to be missed.

The *Music* directory was not a disappointment. As a non-specialist, these were the types of resources I would find very useful. The page links you with mostly American sites, but they were of good quality, with lesson plans and great ideas you could adapt very easily to suit your age group. The plans offered had a variety of focus objectives, e.g. Dance and Movement, Instruments, and Components which included dynamics and pattern using familiar classical pieces, e.g. the William Tell overture. These are detailed and informative.

## News

If you become a member, a weekly newsletter is e-mailed to you giving the latest news, articles and current affairs

## Support

Support provides links to unions, government sites, health sites, legal services, professional and subject associations and time savers – seems quite a useful thing to have included.

## Conclusion

Whether you are new to the Internet or not, this site is for you. If you are at the point where everyone else but you seems to find just what they want on the web, this site is for you.

TagTeacherNet hits the nail on the head.

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