

Teaching Reception Class about Technology at Merton Park Primary

ELG15 – Technology “Children recognise that a range of technology is used in places such as homes and schools. They select and use technology for particular purposes.”

Children:

- Learn about technology around us
- Learn to use the iPads generally
- Learn how to take photos on the iPads
- Learn how to import them from the Camera Roll into the Shadow Puppet app (free)
- Learn how to record their voices
- Learn how to save, email & export finished work

Discussion - What is technology?

This was an interesting question, to which I didn't really know the definitive answer! So I took advice via Twitter and it was generally described by EYFS experts as “Any tool that someone has made which helps us to do a job” – school examples include stapler, pen, Sellotape dispenser, “Good Work” stamp, clocks, paper, pencils, fire extinguishers, iPad, toy till, computer, fire alarm etc

The children described what job each of these helped us to do and T described the iPad and the toy till as “super technology”, so we discussed how these items of technology are different from “normal” technology. We discussed examples of super technology. We decided (I guided them a bit here) that they were technologies that have rules inside them. And we simplified this to rules such as:

“When I press the button, wash the clothes”

“When there is a fire, make a loud sound”

“When I flick the flicker, boil the water”

Sorting technology to reinforce understanding of definitions



We sorted lots of examples of small technology into hoops labeled “technology” & “super technology”. When we placed an item of super technology into the correct hoop, we talked about what rules were inside it.

School tour

We practised taking photos of each other using the iPads - placing the object in the middle of the photo and keeping the iPad still whilst we took the photo (this was very hard as we were concentrating on not dropping the iPads too – I am thinking that the iPad cases with large handles may be easier for the EYFS children to use!).

We went on a journey round the school, looking for items of super technology. I let the children identify them and we talked about what each was for, looked at the buttons on them, asked people who used them to explain them, and where possible, used them ourselves. We took photos of our

hands on the photocopier, so that children could work out how it worked and see the printed result. The office manager went outside and pressed the button on the gate so they could see how the entrance phone worked – they called this device “The See-People-Thing” and talked about it only letting Goodies in and not letting Baddies in. We stuck with their terminologies.

The super technologies they identified , photographed and explained the rules for were:

- Kettle (When I flick the flicker, then boil the water)
- Washing machine (When I press the button, then wash the clothes)
- Microwave (When I close the door & press the button, then cook the food)
- Disabled toilet alarm (When I press the switch, then make the noise)
- Smoke alarm (When I smell smoke then make a noise)
- Photocopier (When I close the lid and press the button then take a photo and print it on the paper)
- Printers (When the computer sends a message then print the picture)
- Computers (When I turn it on then I can paint a picture)
- Entrance video phone - “See People Thing” (When the phone rings then see if it’s a Goodie or Baddie and if it’s a Goodie then let them in)
- Toaster (When I push the thing down then cook the bread and make it crunchy and brown!)

The children talked about their favourite items. P told me that his favourite was a printer. A few minutes later, he suddenly reappeared with the good work stamp in his hand and told me “This is a printer too”!

Using Shadow Puppet to record our work

We discussed the iPad app “Shadow Puppet” and I explained that they could choose some technology photographs they had taken to import from the iPad and then they would speak into the iPad and talk about the technology they had chosen. The children all chose one item to talk about and they chose and imported the appropriate photo from the Camera Roll. We took it in turns to speak. We discussed:

- Speaking loudly as there was a lot of background noise
- Speaking clearly and slowly, facing the iPad and staying close to it
- Staying still whilst we spoke (hard!)
- Taking turns to stay very still and quiet whilst someone was talking

Note – you can “redo” the audio on each photo.

They were thrilled to hear their voices on the group practice video. We then emailed the video to their class teacher, and also saved it to Camera Roll so that the video was also on the iPad. I used the File Explorer app to transfer it to the server.

The children then each made their own Shadow Puppet video – we did it in groups of 2 children so we could concentrate. This is also testing their confidence and speaking skills, rather than purely their understanding of technology as F in particular, although she understood the technology, was shy and nervous whilst speaking (despite being in a group by herself). If they were older, they could make notes to speak from but these children wouldn’t be able to read them fluently.

We emailed the individual videos to their teacher – they did this themselves and some also wrote a little message. We discussed what email was as most of them hadn’t sent an email before. It would

be interesting for their teacher to open the email in front of the class so they can see the other end of the email happening.

We also saved the videos to the Camera Roll together, and I have used the File Explorer app to save them in the reception class folder on the server.

You can use this app to do more eg add text, if you want to develop it further.

Subsequently the class has used Shadow Puppet to retell the story of Elmer the Elephant. The children's confidence in recording their voices is growing and the Elmer videos are much clearer!

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Footnote:

This week I went to an exhibition at The Serpentine Gallery (in Hyde Park), of paintings by the artist Michael Craig-Martin. This exhibition includes his paintings from 1981 to 2015, looking at technology; laptops, games consoles, black-and-white televisions and lightbulbs – the differences in the pictures demonstrates how technology has changed over this period. You can see more here.

Two of his larger paintings are shown below – we are asking (older) children, via our school blog:

- What items of technology can you see?
- Can you describe their function?

