

Recording, Reviewing and Evaluating Learning

Christmas decorations with flashing lights! How a group of Year 4 students produced a multimedia presentation to document their electricity learning.



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Neil Woodcock, a Year 4 teacher, ICT coordinator and member of the senior management team at Luckwell Primary School, was a key player in developing the school's new curriculum which is organised around themes. Neil was keen to ensure ICT was meaningfully embedded across the curriculum rather than being seen as a separate lesson in which functional skills were taught.



Children at Luckwell can participate in designing their curriculum by voting for the topic they'd like to study within each themed block of learning. As part of their seasonal theme of Christmas, Neil's Year 4 children had chosen to learn about electricity by making Christmas decorations that lit up, using circuits that incorporated LEDs.

Neil wanted to incorporate digital literacy into this work through the collaborative use of video cameras, stills cameras and audio recorders to document, review and reflect on their experimentation with circuits and their plans for their Christmas decoration.

"Children will be able to see what they have done [in constructing their circuits] and use the video of it to spot errors. Children can also use the videos to record sets of instructions and creating sound files enables children to speak about their learning and discuss their plans, meaning that the theory that they learn is more embedded."

Year 4 teacher

Neil wanted the children to communicate their learning to their peers and their parents via a multimedia presentation. He was keen that they should think carefully when choosing what to include in the presentation from the array of media that would be available to them. Importantly, Neil wanted the children to think about what they had learnt and how they should record their learning.

"This will mean the children need to consider the level of detail involved and what they can assume the audience already knows. They will also be selecting the images, video and sound files they want to use from a selection of lots. So they need to be very precise about their purpose."

Year 4 teacher

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What they did

Following some initial lessons on electricity and circuits, the children planned what their Christmas decorations would look like and began to investigate suitable circuits.

Neil gave the children the responsibility of choosing their groups of two or three, stressing that they should choose to work with people they knew would help them to learn.

During all the following sessions a range of digital stills cameras, digital video cameras and digital voice recorders were available for the children to use as and when they wanted to record their plans and their learning.

“The first week of the project saw the class using the videos, cameras and microphones when they were experimenting with electricity. Recording their circuits that worked and didn't work.”

Year 4 teacher

The students worked together in groups of two or three and made joint decisions around the design of their Christmas decoration, including what types of circuit and colours of LED to use. As they collaboratively experimented with circuits, Neil reminded them to consider how to record those 'that worked' so they would remember them.

The children then used the software '2create' to produce a multimedia presentation, documenting their learning. Children needed to sort through their video clips and sound files and choose to include ones that not only best represented their learning journey but that also would be understood by their audience, which would be their parents and peers.



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Successes and next steps

Although the digital technology was not the focus of the learning in this piece of work, the students were clear about the **purpose** of using the digital cameras and voice recorders to document their learning and their perceived advantages of doing so:

“The cameras are good if you forget something, you can look back. We used it to record what we’re going to do, we’ve recorded our plan.”

Year 4 student

“You can remember it better, you can see what you’ve done.”

Year 4 student

Students developed their group decision-making skills by deciding which pieces of information needed to be recorded. They were also able to comment on their collaboration skills, saying:

“We had to make sure we were in a group where everyone would work well together. It’s going well.”

Year 4 student

Making the multimedia presentations gave the children the chance to reflect on their learning journey and remember how they had achieved the creation of their Christmas decoration. They also began to develop some audience awareness by having to choose which video and audio clips to include in their presentation.

In this project students were using digital technologies to record their experiences for two very different outputs. One was to support their learning, to enable them to remember successful circuits they had created. The other was to document their learning process for an audience. In further work students could evaluate the technologies they had used, in terms of whether the same technologies were appropriate for each task.

