



The Impact of a Radio Broadcasting System: Fitzmaurice Primary School, Wiltshire

Overview

“Here at Fitzmaurice we were lucky enough to be given funding to buy an Anderton Tiger Radio Broadcasting System, half a days training with expert Russell Prue and subsequently we have bought two additional microphones and an On Air sign. The project’s main aim was to see what impact the system could have on improving boys writing, although the focus has shifted towards developing speaking and listening skills and the impact of radio on school community. Good practice in ICT had been embedded in the school ethos and policy and we were keen for radio to add to successful initiatives already in place.”

“Overall the Radio has been a welcome addition to school life and is a technology that the school would like to take further. There has been solid evidence to suggest the radio had made significant difference for some pupils and there is no doubting its ability to engage children of all ages when used appropriately.”

Research / Methodology

“Radio Broadcasting systems are not common place in Primary Schools so research in the area is limited.”

“When using any technology a key question that needs to be asked is; will it have significant impact on children’s learning? When carrying out this research, it was important to consider whether or not the impact of the Radio Broadcasting System matched the time and money that was to be spent on it. Previous research on technologies highlight some dangers; ‘It is clear technology alone does not make a difference to learning’ (Higgins et al: 2012) Therefore it is important not to underestimate the teacher’s role in facilitating learning during the research and not relying on the radio on its own.”

“However, switching our focus to the area of ‘speaking and listening’ has opened up more evidence of research in schools and clear links with curriculum standards;

According to the QCA, ‘the main aims are: to encourage pupils “to speak clearly and to develop and sustain ideas in talk”; to develop “active listening strategies and critical skills of analysis”; to take on “different roles within groups”.’ (standards.dfes.gov.uk) Analysis of skills was an area we were keen to incorporate to improve and develop radio shows and speaking and listening skills. This meant listening back to radio shows to identify positives and negatives as a group and making alterations based on self-assessment.

Research by Neil Mercer and Lyn Dawes (The Importance of Speaking and Listening) has shown that pupil voice in the classroom can follow a pattern of Initiation-Response-Feedback and technologies such as the radio allow children to use their speaking skills in a more creative way.”

Key Findings

- Radio broadcasts have given the school an increased sense of community. During the two broadcasts each week, the team mention what has been happening at school and what is coming up, as well as local and global news to give children a sense of the wider community. Towards the end of the research, students were writing a blurb for each show on the website, something we will look to take further.

'It lets people who don't listen to the news know what is going on and what is going on inside school.' (Sarah – Year 4)

Evidence – Interviews with children, broadcasts on school website, photos.

<http://www.fitzmauriceschool.info/fitzmaurice-radio>



Mr Gamble from a local charity is interviewed by the team!

- Radio has improved script writing aspects of literacy and broadened vocabulary. The Radio System has acted as a stimulus and exciting tool for children to work towards when preparing scripts. During the research it was easy to make cross-curricular links, particularly in History.

Evidence – Examples of children's work, Literacy APP sheets, Lesson plans

- Those who have been involved in radio have improved their speaking and listening skills. Children involved in the research stated that they liked the fact that they couldn't be seen when using the radio and this made them more confident when speaking in front of others. Discussions on content of broadcasts helped the children understand their audience and what was appropriate and interesting to deliver.

'Radio... helped me by letting me talk in front of the whole school because I can't be seen.' (Leon – Year 4)

Evidence – S & L APP sheets (See Appendix 1 – APP sheet), broadcast examples (<http://www.fitzmauriceschool.info/fitzmaurice-radio>)

- Developing technical skills for small group of children was a positive of the study. The pupils who were given more time using the system quickly took to the technical aspects and, particularly in year six, were able to use the system effectively and smoothly without any guidance.

Evidence – Pupil Interviews (See Appendix 2 – MPG4)

- During the entire research project, not one argument or disagreement was evident among the children. Predominantly children worked in pairs to research their items and prepare their scripts and during shows children were silent while on air. Children were forced to collaborate in various ways and learned quickly what each other's

gestures meant in order to broadcast effectively and what order they needed to speak. It was notable how little, if at all, teacher input was needed to organise shows after establishing their roles at the beginning.

Evidence – Photos, Observations.



Katie our presenter jotting down her running order!

- Children have been involved in an activity that gives them vocational skills needed for jobs after school, using technologies that are relevant. During the study, many children said they would like to 'do radio' when they were older, some of these focussed on aspects that weren't speaking roles. The research was great in giving them examples of some of the jobs involved in radio and a chance to fulfil the roles and evaluate their own performance.

Challenges

- Unfortunately, being a relatively small school, an opportune space for the Broadcasting System in school has been hard to find. During the research, we have had it in our Music Room which is occupied four days a week. We therefore found it difficult to juggle times and schedule Radio sessions around music lessons. A quiet space, dedicated to radio, would maximise the benefit.
- Training staff (and children) has been difficult as it is often been given to the TA to take groups in and out of the radio room to use the software. Therefore, during the research project, only two classes have used the system effectively during lessons. We have relied on Radio Club and some year sixes who have grasped the technical side of the equipment quickly.

Final Thoughts

It's been an exciting journey for our school using the radio and those children that have used it have thoroughly enjoyed both the technical and performing aspects of using it, realising it is a privilege that not all schools are lucky enough to have.

Appreciating how difficult it is for the modern teacher and all of their responsibilities, there is scope for huge amounts of learning through Radio. Skype interviews and broadcasting live outside of school were aspects that we were unable to touch upon this year but areas for the future.

'To improve radio, we could give more people a change to join in.' (Oskar – Year 4)

Bibliography

- Higgins et al, 2012. The Impact of Digital Technology on learning; A Summary for the Education Endowment Foundation. Durham University.
- Dawes, L & Mercer N (2013)
http://orbit.educ.cam.ac.uk/wiki/The_Importance_of_Speaking_and_Listening

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Speaking and Listening APP Sheet

Appendix 2 - Pupil Interview (MPG4)

The Anderton Tiger Desktop is available for just £5,500 plus VAT. Colleagues may like to know that recently a new analogue product has been introduced for just £2,995 plus VAT. Please visit www.AndertonTiger.com/Broadcasting for full details

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