

My Favourite... Art Lesson

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Find out what goes on in Joanne Murray's classroom,
Teaching Award winner 2009...

A bit about Joanne...

YOU'RE AN ART AND DESIGN CO-ORDINATOR, SO HOW DID YOU END UP WINNING THE BECTA AWARD FOR NEXT GENERATION LEARNING?

Joanne Murray: I find that ICT ties in well with art and design. Despite not having a background in the subject, I enjoy sitting down and experimenting with technology. This is the best approach for discovering how to use ICT creatively, I think.

HOW DO YOU USE ICT IN THE CLASSROOM?

JM: When we make a stop-motion animation film the children collaborate on the script using a Wiki. They all have their own usernames and passwords so they can log in and make changes whenever they want. One pupil might add in a wee joke, someone else might fix the punctuation, while another child might think of interesting names for the characters.

What's good?

At the moment the children have taken on the role of reporters interviewing Victorian servants. Each child has a different job – director, actor, etc. The thing I love is when you give a shy youngster the role of director and they turn out to be fantastic. It's a lovely to see them discovering a talent they didn't know they had.

What's tough?

The time element. There are so many things that have to be done and so many ideas you want to try out. It's important to cover the whole curriculum, but you don't want to knock the creative edges off!

The lesson

TP: WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE ART AND DESIGN LESSON?

JM: It's an idea that started out as an ICT/art and design project but then expanded out into geography and other areas of the curriculum. We created a character called Archie the Rabbit who became the star of a stop animation film written and storyboarded by the children. When we finished, we weren't quite ready to leave Archie behind, so I asked the children whether they'd like him to go on another adventure? The nearly took off. "YES!"

TP: SO WHAT WAS ARCHIE'S NEXT ADVENTURE?

JM: One of my hobbies is Geocaching (geocaching.com). This is an international game of hiding and seeking treasure. The idea is that you hide a treasure box somewhere in the world, pinpoint its location using GPS technology and then share these co-ordinates with other people – or 'geocachers' - online. Anyone with a GPS device can then try to locate the hidden treasure or 'geocache'. In some geocaches you find 'travel bugs'. These are trackable items that geocachers move from place to place, picking up stories along the way. I thought, hang on, we could do this at school!

TP: THEN WHAT?

JM: We made a FIMO model of Archie and attached a tracking tag to him. The children decided on where they would like Archie's adventure to take him, which included the pyramids in Cairo, Sydney in Australia and then back to Ireland for summer 2010. These goals were added to Archie's geocaching page online and the children also requested that anyone who found the rabbit would write a little bit about what he had seen or done and upload a photo or two. Then it was time to set Archie off on his adventure. We located a nearby geocache and went on a field trip to seek it out. When the children discovered it, we deposited Archie and returned to the classroom to log his location: Tullyhogue Fort.

TP: HOW DID THE LESSON DEVELOP?

JM: Other geocachers discovered Archie and he began to move from place to place. The children tracked his progress on the internet. He hasn't quite made it to Egypt yet, but he has been on some adventures. A little girl and her granddad took him to the summit of Cat Bells in the Lake District. We have a photo of this wee rabbit at the top of the fell. Eventually, all the logs and photos will be used to create a new adventure for Archie as part of a truly global storytelling project. The children will compose the story using VoiceThread (voicethread.com), a collaborative, multimedia slide show that holds images, documents, and videos.

Joanne Murray is KS2 co-ordinator, Art and Design co-ordinator and KS2 Literacy co-ordinator at Cookstown Primary School, Cookstown.

