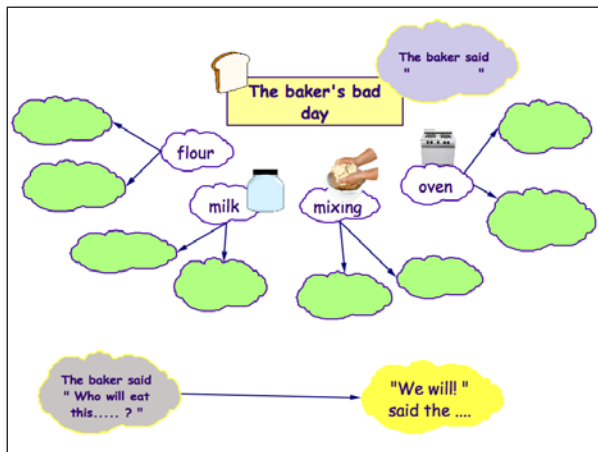


Kidspiration® inspires and engages pupils in literacy and supports teachers' planning



Zoe's pupils loved planning using Kidspiration and particularly enjoyed the pictures and recording voice facilities.

Zoe Benson, a support for learning teacher at Trinity Primary School, Edinburgh, uses Kidspiration® in lessons with pupils to help develop literacy skills. Teachers sought a solution which could be used not only to develop children's writing skills, but also to support staff in the planning stages of developing writing activities. Kidspiration has exceeded the school's expectations and Zoe has been more than satisfied with how it has benefited the school.

The significance of planning in education

Zoe's introduction to Kidspiration could not have arrived at a more appropriate time. Edinburgh 'etam' (IT support) with Learning and Teaching Scotland funded Kidspiration software licences for each primary school in Edinburgh. Zoe had been considering other options for planning writing activities but she was immediately impressed by Kidspiration's visual planning capabilities, seeing its potential for supporting both student and teacher. Before discovering Kidspiration, staff at Trinity Primary School planned writing activities using the traditional method of paper and pencil. As a school they wanted to further develop the 'process of writing', which included planning, as well as embedding the use of ICT in the curriculum. Zoe was therefore extremely pleased when she discovered that Kidspiration had many pre-built writing templates that made planning more interactive and also allowed pupils to have personal choice.

Teachers "fighting over" Kidspiration

In August 2008, Trinity Primary School implemented 15 interactive whiteboards used in conjunction with a set of ibooks, all of which now have Kidspiration 3 downloaded onto them. "Kidspiration is so popular amongst staff that we often end up being disappointed at not being able to book out the ibooks, as a colleague has beaten us to it! It has produced extremely positive results with teachers able to demonstrate and model, using Kidspiration on the whiteboard, the planning activity they would like the children to complete independently or in pairs on ibooks," comments Zoe.

Since introducing Kidspiration to lessons, Zoe has seen positive results, especially with children who have additional support needs. "Kidspiration is so child-friendly; pupils absolutely adore it. They love the animations—the fact that they can simply type in a word and are presented with a choice of images is brilliant. It is extremely motivating and allows them to personalise each project they are working on. For one particular project entitled 'A day in the life of Tutankhamen', pupils used Kidspiration and selected animated galloping horses to represent Tutankhamen horse-riding. Using images when representing content helps reinforce facts and improves learner retention. Learners recently worked in groups using Kidspiration on their ibooks to create a story. They then swapped ibooks to listen to each other's stories. This helps develop oral presentation skills, and in turn encourages students in their writing process as well as improving self-esteem," said Zoe.

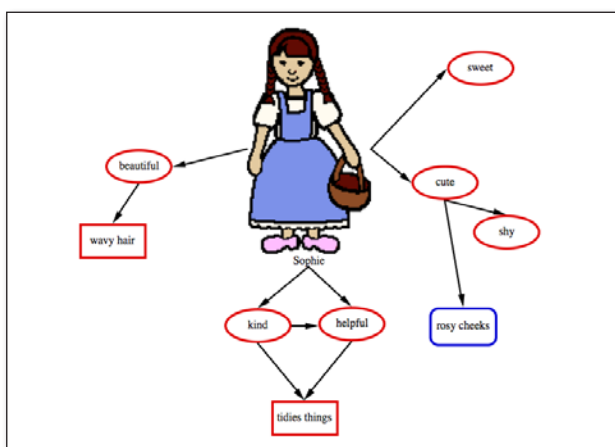
Supporting those with additional support needs

Trinity Primary School is currently utilising Kidspiration to assist all learners. However, the programme has been particularly useful in helping learners with additional support needs due to the variety of visual and auditory features and ways you can adapt Kidspiration to engage and support them. "It has been an invaluable piece of software to have," said Zoe. "Kidspiration has proven motivating for one particular learner, because she is able to use pictures instead of words for planning stories and using ICT is always a great incentive. Another positive example is the way we have been able to use Kidspiration with a child with Asperger's Syndrome, who is usually

reluctant to write—using the software with him encouraged him to compose imaginatively.”

Zoe was also impressed with the way Kidspiration enables educators to differentiate the pupils’ input, and liked the way that pupils are able to independently provide their thoughts. “If needed, the children can use the audio features and listen to the ‘symbol bubble’ and then type in their response. Reluctant writers can also record their thoughts onto the template as well, instead of, or as well as writing. This is particularly useful for pupils whom I often scribe for,” says Zoe.

For some pupils who are reluctant writers or dyslexic, they plan in sentences. “The ability to transfer their plans into the writing format of Kidspiration means that they were not faced with a blank page but have their skeleton ideas with which they can add further detail,” reports Zoe.



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Incorporating Kidspiration into the curriculum

“I like the versatility of Kidspiration, as it enables you to use a mind map structure for planning and supports visual, oral and kinaesthetic learners. No matter what class I am teaching, if I cannot find a template to suit my needs then I make up a mind map template, putting in questions for pupils to answer under various headings that will allow them to develop their ideas and structure their writing,” comments Zoe.

Keen to make sure that the children became engaged with their planning, Zoe wanted to see how the software would be received across the classes and stages. She found that the children absolutely loved planning using Kidspiration and particularly enjoyed the pictures and recording voice facilities.

Trinity Primary School was looking for a tool to use for improving the planning of writing activities.

Kidspiration, with its various ready-made, easy to use formats as well as the ability to create personalised templates, fit the bill.

Zoe summarises, “We have seen an improvement across the entire school since the introduction of Kidspiration in integrating ICT into the curriculum. Not only have the pupils flourished in their writing, but staff have also recognised its advantages for planning project activities as well as their own planning for curricular areas. With the newest version of Kidspiration having brand new maths tools to support numeracy, staff are excited to integrate Kidspiration into the maths curriculum as well, something we will implement very soon. To fully reap the benefits of the software however, a site license is most effective rather than purchasing a single copy, because if our school is any example to go by, everyone will want to use it!”

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