

Resource purchasing – the value of purchasing for both learner and teacher

When selecting resources for use in education there are many requirements to be met in order to ensure that the resource purchased is not only financially viable and within budget, but in addition, will provide children with a meaningful learning experience. However, is it possible to obtain resources that not only aid the learner, but also assist and facilitate the educator? Lee Batstone, headteacher and ICT coordinator of Madley Primary School in Herefordshire discusses his findings after testing Inspiration Software's mind mapping resource, Kidspiration 3.

I am responsible for most of the purchasing of hardware and software within Madley School. Deciding how to invest a budget is a considerable responsibility. The person accountable for budget management and procurement needs to ensure that any resources selected will meet the requirements of the school and its pupils. However, it is often easy to consider only how resources could help the children, whilst overlooking the teacher's needs.

Mind mapping is a traditional, tried and tested technique designed to develop ideas and thoughts, helping people to formulate concepts into an organised and systematic structure. I recently reviewed mind mapping software Kidspiration 3, which is designed for pupils from early years through to key stage 2 and helps develop thinking, literacy

and numeracy skills.

I selected ten children from years five and six to test the product. My main aim whilst evaluating the resource was to gauge how the children reacted to it, how it assisted their overall learning experience and whether the resource was good value in terms of pricing. Instantaneously, both myself and the children identified that Kidspiration 3 would be a product suitable for varying abilities and ages. The children reported that the visual and auditory aspects of the software were particularly appealing, and they loved how the programme communicated with them. Seeing the children use the resource, I was impressed with how it helped them develop thoughts and really enjoyed seeing the confidence it gave them to think individually.

However, in addition to myself and the children

identifying how Kidspiration 3 could assist their learning, we also recognised that this product is a tool that could help the teacher too. I was extremely impressed with the extensive potential usage of the resource and particularly liked the maths tool which has been added to the software recently. It is an effective modelling tool for whiteboards but most interestingly, is the scope I saw in terms of using the software as a tool to help teachers plan lessons. I currently mind map regularly – it is a fantastic way to process your ideas and brilliant for formulating new ones. However, I've been using a notebook which I find can get cluttered so it was great to discover a software tool that enables mind mapping. Kidspiration 3 allows mind mapping to be done in a clear and concise way because you can continue expanding your ideas, without the worry of running out of space – as happens on paper!

Thinking outside of the box is important if you are to ensure successful educational procurement – it is about considering a range of needs. Another example of how software can be useful for the



teacher is in the production of school newsletters, magazines and websites. Serif's design and graphics software, for example, is being used by teachers to implement the OCR Nationals in ICT, as well as across the curricular and doubles up as a good package for teachers to use to produce their own material.

Kidspiration 3 is a perfect example of an invaluable resource which not only helps support the child; the learner, but also aids the teacher in their role. In the future, I believe that in terms of procurement decisions, if bursars consider the needs of both the pupil and the teacher this would be positive as it helps ensure wise purchasing choices are made. Any resource that helps the teacher as well as the learner has got to be advantageous!

For more information on Inspiration Software, please visit their website at www.taglearning.com/inspiration or visit www.inspiration.com/global.

