

Q Julia Bishop (researcher)  
A Sonia C (teacher at 'Meadow Banks' Primary School)

Q Just to clarify before we begin that this study obviously is about technology and play. And when we say technology, we're actually thinking about the broadest range of things, not just devices, iPads and things, but we're thinking about content that comes with that as well, apps and games and social media, internet connected toys, stuff that isn't a toy but is used in a playful way. So really, the whole gamut of things, even things in our heads that might come from media content that we're not actually engaging the device.

A Okay.

Q So that's what these relate to. Anyway, thank you very much for agreeing to do this, Sonia. So the first set of questions relate to curriculum and pedagogy. And perhaps most obviously, if you could start off by giving me some idea about what technologies or media you use in your classroom every day in your planning.

A Every day, we obviously use the interactive whiteboard. So we've obviously got the flipchart which is probably the main basis of the class because everything gets used for every single lesson – so from Maths, English, all the way through to Art – because it's a good way to demonstrate to the children, represent what kind of thing they're going to be doing.

So especially for Art and things, if I've given an example, I can put it underneath a projector and then it obviously goes onto the whiteboard, so then they can see it – it just makes it bigger and clearer for the children to be able to see. So I'd say that mostly every lesson will be based around the interactive whiteboard.

Different videos and games will be played because in Maths, I always like, at the start for the fluency focus for it to be like a game. So we use different sites and things for that, so it exposes the children to a range of different things that all link to the topic. So at the moment, their [unclear] to do times tables. So I've found that there's different times tables games and sometimes it requires them to challenge each other, like boys versus girls and stuff like that, which is really nice. Yes.

Q So that's beyond the Times Table Rock Stars themes?

A Yes.

Q So you just seek out your own stuff?

A Yes. So different sites that I like to use. And I like to bring those into the beginning of every Maths lesson because it breaks it up but it gives them that chance to practice those things that they're going to need in later life.

Q Yes. So tell me a bit, because you must put a bit of effort into finding those other things when you've got this thing obviously your school and many schools, as I understand it, bought into. Do you say it's a variety? And what impact does that have on the children?

A They definitely have their favourites.

Q Oh really, yes.

A So I try and rotate it. So like I was saying in my Maths, I try and do it there because obviously we've got five Maths lessons in a week. I try and make sure that they're all different every single day and then, for the next week, they'll be different. It's on a two week rota. So then, when the games come back around again, it might be on a different focus.

So the last time they used it could've been for times tables; and this time when we using it, it could be for addition. But you get to know the games that the children respond well to and the ones that they like. So then it gives you a bit of an idea and next time, I'm going to try and find new games or different ideas of what to go for, yes.

Q Yes, oh, that's really neat. Can you give me an example of some of the ones you've found go particularly well?

A So I like to use a website called Top Marks. And like I said, we're focusing on times tables at the moment, so there's one where it's like a basketball game. So the first thing that they have to do is that they get about six questions and it's like quickfire. So they have to write in what the total is.

But what I found interesting is that some of them... It doesn't connect to the interactive whiteboard so they have to use their mouse and keyboard, which I found very interesting, that the children don't know how to use a mouse and keyboard. So it's good exposure for them obviously to get used to using those types of things. Because at the start of the year, when they were trying to use the mouse, they were just like, I don't know – I don't know how to do it – because they're obviously using touchscreens. So that was really good for them.

Yes, so with Top Marks, there's that basketball one where they'll get about six questions and they need to type in the answer. But then they have the opportunity to go up to the whiteboard and they drag this arrow down and it lets off the basketball and they have to try and get it into the hoop.

There's another one with bowling which is a similar one where they've got a round of questions that they need to answer first and then they've got to try and knock the pins down by dragging the ball back and then letting it go when the arrow at, I don't know, the accuracy and stuff like that. Yes. So they're really quite nice games.

And then obviously... But those ones take a bit longer. So there, if I don't have assembly or something, I'll try and use those ones so they've got a bit more time and a lot more children can have a go with them, whereas the rest of them, it could be like using Splat so that the children can get up and have a go and it's a lot quicker for them to focus to get through.

Q Yes, that's really neat. It's interesting about the speed and also that additional content...

A Yes.

Q Around the actual sums.

- A Yes.
- Q It's really interesting they respond to those sporting things. Yes.
- A Yes. I think it's just things that obviously they're used to doing outside school, so like playing sports or going bowling and things like that. So I think they find it exciting. And I don't think they realise most of the time that they're actually doing Maths or anything like that, so it's nice.
- Q Oh, that's neat, yes. Can you give an example of some of the other websites that you would use? Not necessarily for Maths but that you found...
- A So I try and stay away from Twinkl as much as I can, but that's...
- Q I don't know about that. Tell me why, a bit about that.
- A So Twinkl is a website for teachers where it has loads of different resources. They are good but I've just been in schools previously where they use Twinkl a lot, so all of their worksheets end up being based on that. So I try and steer away from it where I can. But they're quite nice for visual things for kids. So I've been using them with my children that aren't even on the Year one curriculum yet. And basically, they've been doing adding and subtraction and things but they use the Numicon.
- So they've got Numicon shapes which are... I don't know how to describe them. They're basically like blocks but it's really visual, so they can physically count the different... How many blocks there are and then they can count in other ones and they can find the total by adding. It's basically adding up from a picture. But it's for them to be able to visually see. Rather than having the number, like five add five, they're able to count that there's five and then add the other five. So it allows them to be able to see it which is quite nice. So I like to use them for that. Yes.
- Q So it's like a digital abacus really, isn't it?
- A Yes, they're really good for visual things. And then I use TES which is quite good which again is another teacher site where it's quite good for ideas which I found for their extracurricular things. So like Geography and History, I found that easier to plan because you can see what other teachers have done before but you can't necessarily take what they've done but you can mirror some ideas or tweak it for your class.
- Q Is that the Times Educational Supplements and...?
- A Yes. So it's really a good website for that because obviously not all of it is free anyway on that website but I found it quite interesting to see what other previous year two teachers have done in the subject. And then I'm like, oh okay, well, I'm going to go down this route. Because I like to specialise mine to the children, so the questions that I ask, I like it so that they can relate to it, in a way. So it either has a name in it or something that they're interested in.
- Q I was going to say how would you tweak it, yes.
- A Yes. So it could have the names in. It could relate to them. It could be... Like one of our History topics was the Sheffield floods. And it was amazing that the flood

actually happened again while we were doing the topic. So I was able to then take ideas from general stuff like what is a flood, how does a flood happen, so it was good for that.

But then I was able to customise it to Sheffield. So I was then able to say obviously like the River Don and bring in all those local aspects like Meadowhall and things. And the children were like, Meadowhall, Sheffield Wednesday. Yes, so it was good for that.

Q Yes. Oh, so do you find that that's a good way in with them, that it's all about...? It's not just taking it off the peg.

A Yes.

Q But it's actually trying to somehow customise it to something within their range of experience.

A Yes, definitely. And it's a good way as well, if you can get them... Say, for instance, it was the Sheffield flood and we talked about Sheffield Wednesday, it was a good way to hook them and bring them into the conversation and stuff, because it was something that they could immediately relate to. But then, you could then broaden their experience and their knowledge by then going a bit further with it, which was quite nice. Because we do have a lot of children in my class that aren't exposed to a lot of things, so it's nice for them to be involved.

Q Yes, you feel that it's an effective approach with them.

A Yes.

Q And you've seen them flourish.

A Yes, definitely

Q Oh, that's lovely. How does it relate to the National Curriculum guidance regarding technologies, media and learning?

A So we've got a curriculum obviously for ICT and things like that which is quite hard to do with my year group because a lot of them, yes, they might have iPads at home and things like that, but they've not been exposed to using the different apps that are on there. So they might play games and things, which is fine, but that's not really what the curriculum is about.

So like on what I was supposed to teach them at the start of the year, it was obviously the general things that we did about logging on and logging off, but because most children, when we're using the Chromebooks, haven't used a keyboard before, it took a lot longer to get through that aspect of the curriculum before we could move on. And then moving on from that, they were then going to... We then started to obviously open up apps.

So it was like telling them that this is an app. And they were like, oh, I just thought apps were on phones or on an iPad, not realising that they could be on a Chromebook or anything like that. So it was exposing them to the vocabulary of it. And then they were able to use the search engines and getting to know what the search bars are for, finding different websites, how to retrieve information from

websites.

And they've just moved onto, now, being able to write text in an app. So if they were using Word or something like that, changing the size of it, changing the colour of it, being able to position it in different places on the page. So they've started to move onto that.

But it's taken a lot longer, just because they haven't had the experience with the technology before. So it's almost like you're starting from the beginning again. And at the start of every lesson, you've always got those children that are just like, I can't sign in, I don't know how to.

Q Yes, I see that, yes.

A And it's quite....

Q Yes. So it's that bit of a barrier in a way as well.

A Yes, definitely. I think obviously because if they've got iPads at home, it's a lot easier for them because all they do is unlock it and then they're straight on. Whereas at the start of the year, most of my children didn't even know that you could have your own username and password to get onto your own site and they were just like, what? So that was definitely a barrier. Then obviously learning where all the different letters were on the keyboard and things took a bit more time.

Q Yes. Brilliant. So going back to the previous question, do you try and use technologies every lesson? Because I know there's a bit of a shortage of Chromebooks and things for the...

A Yes.

Q Especially for Y2, I think I've heard.

A Yes, it's very difficult in Year 2 because all of our Chromebooks and iPads are up here. There aren't enough Chromebooks for every single child in my class which is the first frustration for me because it makes it a lot harder to plan those lessons. Because even in things like Science, one of my Science lessons, I made it IT based where we could... We started the materials topic; I wanted them to use the Chromebooks and the iPads and things to start finding out what are these materials made out of, can you find examples for me, and things like that.

Q Yes, [overtalking] lessons, yes.

A So that was one of my Science lessons that I'd planned. But it's very... It makes it difficult because if I was to make a flipchart to show them, step by step, what sites to go on, I can't because some of them are going to be using iPads and then others are using Chromebooks and there isn't enough to go around. So you have to think about the ability of the children. Will it take them longer to use the Chromebook or would they benefit from using the iPad, when really, I'd like them all to use the same thing.

Q And would you want them to each have a device that they can use?

A Yes, definitely. Because I feel like sometimes if they're working in pairs, there's always that dominant child that will almost take over, and then some children will

sit back and then just let it happen. So are they actually learning anything? Are they...?

So I try and make sure that mine have got numbers. Then I shout the numbers out so they know to switch over to the next person, so it gives them a chance. But then again, you've still got those children that are very dominant. And even when the other person is having a go, they'll still be like, oh no, do this, do that, and they're not letting them have that free...

Q And they're actually...

A Yes.

Q Yes, actually doing it for them, you're indicating there.

A Yes.

Q So all the equipment lives here in The Winter Zone and then would you bring it to your classroom or would you need to book the room and come up here?

A So it's always booked out with your ICT slot. So ours has just switched to a Wednesday. So after lunchtime on Wednesday, we know that this room is always going to be free for us to come and use, whereas apart from the year one class, everybody else has Chromebooks that are outside of their classroom, so they tend to do the ICT lessons from the classroom. It is a bit of an effort, trying to get all of the Chromebooks down and the iPads down to our class because we're probably one of the furthest away.

But we try to, especially when they're having afternoons. So next week, we're doing a board game, a colouring afternoon, because they're claiming back their OTIS time and they've chosen that they want to do that. So I've decided I'm going to bring down the Chromebooks as well so it gives them a chance to play some games on there, and then they've got the physical board games, like traditional ones, so they've got that choice, yes.

Q Yes. Do you ever use...? You talked about colouring in. Do you every use colouring in apps on [overtalking]?

A That's in their curriculum. We should've touched on that in Autumn too. But because of how far behind they are using technology, it'll be something now that we do in Spring. So what we'll start to go onto is drawing shapes. And then they'll be using different colours for the shapes and things like that. So that's what they'll move onto.

Q Oh, nice. Yes, brilliant. It's really fascinating. So another question is about to what extent your approach is supported by the leadership of the school, the uses of technology and media in class?

A They try and do quite a few training sessions. So I'm part of the Science and Technology team. So that's quite interesting, that we link with ICT as well. So we have quite a few meetings a year where we can talk about is this working, what are you doing? But it's nice to see what the other year groups are doing as well because there might be ideas that you could almost simplify and things for your year group. So that's quite nice.



So the school try as much as they can to try and put training sessions on because I'm quite lucky that I'm quite new to teaching so I've just had my training, whereas some of the other teachers there were telling me that the kids know more about technology than they do. So that's quite good for obviously teachers that have been here quite a long time, for them to have a refresher of different things that are out there. So that's quite nice.

The leadership are very focused on making sure that you're getting through the curriculum and things like that, making sure that you're sticking to it and you're not just teaching things just for the sake of it and just tick-boxing. So they're quite good for that. So then we all know where we're going and where we need to be by the end of the year, kind of thing.

Q Yes. And would you say...? It's interesting what you said about meetings and refresher and maybe sharing knowledge between those more techy than others, sort of thing.

A Yes.

Q And it is a big job because it's changing so fast, isn't it?

A Yes.

Q There's new stuff coming on the scene all the time.

A Yes, definitely.

Q Quite hard to consolidate before you need to be moving onto the next thing. But I wondered if you felt it was a joined up approach between all the year groups or is this something you're working on in a way?

A No, I wouldn't say all the year groups are joined, to be honest. I could tell you what some of the classes are doing but I couldn't tell you what all the year groups are doing.

Q Yes, and perhaps that's not something you feel is necessarily a bad thing.

A No.

Q It just occurred to me.

A Yes. Apart from those meetings, it's unless you need support in something. So when we were teaching the kids about the different log-ons and stuff like that, when we started producing work, I wanted to know if there was an easier way for us to be able to save stuff because there were things that we needed to print out to put in our books. So that's when I started seeking advice from the other teachers. But apart from the meetings and then if you go yourself to ask, then no, not really.

Q No. If money and resources was not a problem, what would you like to see in place or what would you...?

A A new interactive whiteboard for my class because, at the moment, ours isn't working.

Q Oh, really?

A So you can see it and everything, you can... It's projected onto the board but it's making my lessons a little bit more difficult – which is fine, I'm just going old school with the whiteboard. They're... I'm having to... I can't write anything on my board and I can't drag anything. So those interactive games are becoming harder for the kids to be able to do.

And for my Maths lessons, I'm having to go across to the whiteboard to write them on there, which is almost a deterrent for them because they're having to look at one thing and then I'm writing it on another board. And it's hard for them to be able to see where I'm matching it up, kind of thing. So I can't see a real big problem with it but it obviously would be a lot easier if they could see where I was writing the answer or where I was drawing something on the board, how it links and things like that. What else? Just being able to... Like how we've had the VR stuff. That...

Q Oh, here in The Winter Zone, yes.

A Yes. That was an amazing thing for the kids because it was something that they'd obviously... they'd read about, they'd seen on videos and stuff like that, but it was the first time they were ever able to experience...

Q Wow. Yes.

A Stuff like that. So that was nice for them. But probably just different stuff like... Because we are very limited when we go into... So like at the end of the year – I've already been looking at it – we need to start creating almost like our own programme. So it's like a blog kind of thing and it has games in it.

Q For the curriculum.

A Yes, so for the curriculum. But all of the sites that I've looked at so far, the school has to buy into. But obviously, with funding and stuff, we can't do that. So, yes.

Q No, yes. So do you do...? So you're doing coding or things like this as well. You'll be working on that hopefully as the year goes on.

A Hopefully by the end of the year. So in the summer term. At the moment, we've written it down as that they have to... First, they will create their own blog and things like that, which obviously is quite current today.

Q Yes, the day after the election, just for the record.

A And then obviously they'll look at the classic, trying to make games and stuff. Obviously when I was at school, it was using Scratch games and stuff like that.

Q I was going to say about Scratch, yes.

A Yes.

Q And would you use anything like that or...?

A Yes, I can do. But I think there's more current stuff out there.

Q Right. So what would you like to use if you had the money? Or is there anything out there that you had to buy that looks good or...?

A I don't... I can't remember the names of them, but different sites that me and the



other Year two teacher have looked at, just they were more... Obviously, Scratch is quite old school with the character and stuff like that. We've seen other ones where they can pick characters from current things. So it could be from TV programmes that they've watched and stuff like that. So it makes it more interesting for them and it might engage them a bit more rather than... I don't know. Is it a fox, the Scratch character? I don't know what it is.

Q Not sure.

A Yes.

Q [Overtalking] so I haven't done Scratch but yes.

A And things like that. So the...

Q No, I know what you're saying, yes.

A I know it's not really outdated but there are more current stuff than that.

Q Yes. Great. Thanks Sonia. So just the final question here is about do you have any comments about your own practice and relationship to the different sorts of learning, collaborative, enquiry based, problem based, project based, and the way you use technology in the classroom?

A Obviously, the collaborative learning probably comes into when we do it as a class and things like that. And when we come into the ICT suite, they get to work with other students; we try and mix that up when we can so they've got exposure to different conversations with the children surrounding it, which is quite nice as well because we've got some students that might have been exposed to a lot of technology and those that haven't.

And then enquiry based is quite nice. So like I say, before we move onto a new topic, I like them to do their own research and from that, they come up with what... Well, beforehand, they'll come up in class with what questions do you want to find out about this topic? So then we do a massive mind map about what questions we want to know about it. And then they get the opportunity to come and start researching before we start learning any of the topics. So they get a baseline of dates maybe of when things happened.

So like when we learned about The Titanic, we came up here and they were able to tell me by the end of the session, before we'd even learnt anything about the Titanic, how many people were on the boat, how many lifeboats there were. So it was really good for that. Because then, when we went into the lessons, they already had almost a foundation layer and they knew a bit about it which really helped.

Q That's interesting, yes.

A And problem...

Q Can you just tell me how it helped, in a way? Was it an engagement thing?

A Yes. I think it almost triggered an excitement for them. So they had the idea of we need to know these answers. Because my kids are quite literal. So as soon as they've got questions, they're like, right, I need to know the answer for it. And sometimes, they come up with questions where I'm like, I don't know the answer

so we're going to have to look together, which is quite nice. So we research things together.

But yes, definitely, for example, with The Titanic, it excited them because, randomly enough, one of them found out that, like, it sank on my birthday – and things like that. So they cling to little things like that. So then when we started going through the lessons in class on later dates, they were able to be like, oh yes, we saw that, we saw pictures of that, Miss, when we were researching it. Or how did you know that date? Oh, when we were researching it, we found that date, and things like that. So it was quite nice and it kept them engaged throughout it.

Q Yes, that's very interesting. Just to think about The Titanic, do you think the film has had any impact on them?

A Not for those. There were a few children there...

Q [Overtalking] too young, yes.

A Yes, I think it was with older children, possibly. There were a few children that came back in and said, oh, I watched the Titanic at the weekend and stuff like that and we were like, okay. But it was quite nice that it was a new topic for them and that the parents were able to discuss it and we had some parent that brought things in because their relatives had been passengers on The Titanic and things like that, which was just phenomenal.

Q Amazing, yes.

A Yes. So there was one...

Q That knocks me out.

A There was one that was a ticket that obviously they'd put in a case because, how much is that ticket going to be worth now? So they brought that in for the kids to see, which was really good. And...

Q Yes. And did they respond well, the children? Were they like...?

A Yes, because they were just like, wow, it's so old.

Q Lovely, yes.

A So that was nice, yes.

Q Yes. Oh no, thanks for just the extra details. Really interesting on that. So yes, problem-based and project based, yes.

A Problem-based, I don't think I do as much of, which I'd like to do. I'd say it's quite hard to bring into my curriculum, problem-based things, because there's a lot the children are learning for the first time, kind of thing.

Q Yes, so...

A There's the... I think it's Cahoots, their website which we try and use different activities like that with them. So it could be quizzes or things that they need to try

and solve the problems based on that. So we use it for those but it's probably something I could do more.

Project-based learning. That probably obviously comes into our topics and things like that. So like our history theme. We're moving onto, in January, doing about India.

So I've already started planning things for them. So obviously one of them is that they need to know where India is. So I thought it'd be quite nice that we can start looking at maps and things like that and look at digital maps and be able to move in on towns and things like that. So that'd be quite nice to bring technology into that.

Q Yes. So you're really... I can really feel how passionate you are about this and interested.

A Yes.

Q Are you quite... Is technology important for you?

A Yes. I did Media as my undergraduate. So it was really... Yes, I love it, so...

Q Yes. And do you feel that's only relevant for teaching? Do you think it's...?

A Yes, definitely. I think it helped me. Because when I started to do media, I realised quickly that it isn't just about writing newspapers or something like that, or radio or anything like that. It was very much like getting to know the different technologies and how to use them, utilise them. And I think that's been quite good throughout my training and obviously now bringing it into the classroom because I've had that current experience and things of what is out there. And I think that's quite beneficial for my students.

So we've talked about... What did we say we were going to do? Just after they've done their SATs and things like that, we said we were going to start bringing them into things. So when they do their blogs, we've talked about using microphones where they can pretend like they're doing a vlog kind of thing and stuff like that. So that would be quite nice to introduce them to that sort of technology of being able to stop and start using microphones and things like that, yes, try webcam.

Q Do you think they would have anything to bring to that from their experience?

A Possibly. I think a lot of the children listen the radio on their way to school and stuff like that so they might have an understanding of being able to hear things but not being able to see it and being able... Like, can you tell in a story by listening to it rather than being able to see it as well? So I think we might be able to bring things from that.

But I think using microphones and stuff... We used a bit in the Christmas play but not every child got to use them. But obviously it's different when you're recording and then you play it back and you listen to it, because then they can talk about obviously the levels, being close enough to the mic and stuff like that, can you understand what you're saying clearly? So I think that might be quite nice for their oracy as well. Yes.

Q Yes, fascinating. Do you ever get much of a strong sense they're bringing stuff to the class, stuff they looked at on YouTube or research they've done at home or...? I don't know.

A Oh yes. The whole disasters project that we're doing in History, I had more of a response than the other Year 2 class where they'd gone home and they'd made pictures for me, they'd gone and they researched. One child went home and came back with a whole report just based on the captain of the Titanic. And that wasn't something that we were going to cover but then I ended up covering it just because I was so fascinated from what he'd brought in.

Q How had he found that? Had he Googled it or...?

A Yes. So he said that he went home and he researched it. Some children, what I did for them was I wrote them out questions because when we got to the end of it, I saw some of the questions that we hadn't answered. So I put them on a card for them and then they went home and they all brought back one of the answers for me and we shared it. So yes, I think that was mostly from Googling, asking people that they knew, yes.

Q Do you get any sense how they're doing that research at home? Are they using Alexa? Are they using...?

A Mostly iPads.

Q iPads, yes.

A Yes. From when I've asked them about it, they mostly use iPads. Rarely, they use a computer. A few children have said that they've got an Alexa but I don't think that they know that they can use it for asking questions like that.

Q Oh, that's interesting, yes.

A Yes, because we had this discussion where one of the children said that they were asking Alexa to play a song and then it brought up a completely different song. So they responded to Alexa to say why are you playing that? And then it triggered Alexa talking about the history of the song. And they came back, I was so confused, Miss.

And then I was like, did you know that you could ask Alexa questions? And they were like, no, I just thought you... Well, about things like that, I just thought you asked for it to play this or what's the weather and things like that. I don't think they realised anything you can tap into Google, she'll tell you.

Q Yes, interesting. Oh, that's brilliant. So this is your own perspectives and concerns about technology in the classroom in this section. Or actually no, more generally, not just the classroom. So just wondered if you feel that there's any technologies and media that are particularly negative or particularly positive actually for children, either way.

A What, like apps or...?

Q Anything really. Yes, apps or media or content.

A I found YouTube being a bit of a problem for the kids. Especially when I was

training. Because the problem with YouTube is that it doesn't just stop after you've watched one thing. It's like a reel; it just keeps on going. It'll keep on continuously playing new things. And it can almost get dangerous because, yes, a parent might or we might say, oh, watch this, but then, after that, you've got no control. Because you can put them onto it, but then after that...

Q That's right, and then it reels up the next one, doesn't it? Yes.

A Yes, it just keeps on going. But then sometimes, it can go off tangent and it won't be just things related to what you've searched. And we've had instances where we've had to step in as a school from what children have told us what they've been looking at online at home.

And then when we've asked, how have you been exposed to that, they were saying, oh, I was watching YouTube and then a link came up; I clicked on the link – and then it's escalated from there. So it can be quite dangerous because it's one of those things you continuously have to monitor because you don't know what's going to come up next. Yes.

Q No, of course. No, that is difficult.

A Doing other things probably with primary aged students is you've got a lot of them that have already got access to things like Instagram, Twitter and things like that. And it's like, well, how are you using that? Mine don't necessarily have their own but they use their parents'. So mine talk about all the time, oh, did you see that on Facebook? And it was just like, how have you seen that on Facebook? And it was like, oh, my mum let me use my phone.

So it's probably that thing of are there things that they shouldn't be looking at and things like that? So I think that's quite dangerous, that yes, parents might give their phone to the children, but really, once you've given the phone, they can be going on the search engines looking for anything. You don't know.

Q Yes. Oh, that's interesting. Do you have any concerns about data privacy in relation to the children?

A Not really in my year group because I think it's quite limited, what kinds of things they can search for. And there's not really anything where they have to type in their details or anything that we're doing at school.

From a basis of at home, maybe. They might get onto sites. You've obviously seen instances where children have bought stuff through their parents' details and stuff like that. The only other thing that I can think of is when we use the school Twitter, obviously when we take pictures of the children and stuff and we post it on Twitter. Obviously the parents have to sign a consent form to say that they're allowed. But still, think of how many people can access that. So that might be quite... Yes.

Q Yes. So you have some sort of... It could, yes, it's a risk.

A Yes, it is definitely a risk.

Q So do you think children's uses of technologies at home impacts – well, I think you obviously do because you've just said about this – in their lives? But I just wondered if there was any positives that you feel are also coming out in their home

uses.

A Just technology in general?

Q Technology and media, everything, yes, whatever they've got access to – film, I don't know, popular culture – conveyed by media.

A Definitely, well, some news was quite good because obviously, like when the flood happened, the children were able to come in the next day and were like, oh, I saw that the River Don burst its banks again. And obviously I then used aspects of the news to be able to show it them when it was happening.

So on that Thursday, they didn't believe me that it was happening. So we were able to get up BBC Radio Sheffield, BBC News and things like that to be able to show them that this is what's happening right now. So that was quite a nice thing because it blew their minds. They were like... Because they're obviously used to using the internet to look at past events, so I think it was quite nice for them to be able to see something that was currently happening. So that was quite a positive thing to be able to do with them.

Q And how about at home? Do you think there's any positives going on there, stuff they might be bringing into the classroom or stuff they know? Well, you've given an example of that, haven't you?

A Yes. It's definitely good for the home learning that they do at home and things like that, if it's regulated by the parents, of what they're looking at and stuff. Because they come back with some amazing pieces of work that then I put... I've got in my classroom a Wow Work Wall that I need to make bigger because they just bring in so much for me – which, yes, is really nice [overtalking].

Q So that's that information base. What about things like creative things that they've done using media or photos or...?

A In... I really don't know. They make pictures at home and some of the children have said, like when they were drawing pictures of the Titanic and stuff, they based it on a picture that they found on Google Images.

Q Oh, really?

A Which was quite nice. In class, we do this thing – in Art, we've done it before – where we show them a picture and then they need to be able to almost copy the picture from what they can see. Rather than having it next to them to be able to copy, they have to look at it from what they can see from a perspective. And then they analyse it, criticise it and then do it again, see if they can make it any better. Like is that really to scale and things like that, which is quite nice.

Q That's fascinating. So do you find also impacts in terms of other areas, noncurricular areas, extracurricular activities, relationships with peers, break times, using media, technology influence there at all?

A Not really socially or anything like that. I've got children that say they play on the Xbox together and then they talk through that. Quite a few of the boys do that. But phones and stuff they don't have at the moment so there's not really much communication outside of school that they have.



So they've obviously got the TT Rock Stars which we've done before which is quite a nice thing because they compete against obviously children in their own class, so they've got that competitiveness against their peers. But yes, there's not really an aspect for them to be able to communicate with peers at this age.

Q No. Are you aware, in the playground, of reference to media content and that sort of thing?

A They talk about Fortnite, but yes...

Q Right, do the dances, I'm guessing.

A Yes, they do the dances, they talk about Fortnite, that they've played Fortnite and things like that.

Q Roblox or anything like that or other...?

A Minecraft.

Q Minecraft?

A They've spoken about. Not necessarily Roblox in my class, but yes, it's mostly Fortnite and Minecraft that they've spoken about. A lot of them use TT Rock Stars outside of school and obviously like Spelling Shed. But they're the main things that they've...

Q Yes. But they're not impacting on what they might play in the playground?

A No, it's...

Q You're not seeing any kind of reference to those?

A No, it's mostly football that they play and stuff like that, which is quite nice. They've still got their childhood.

Q Okay. So you don't think that they're channelling media content when they even play football, things like things they've seen on TV and stuff like that?

A I think... Yes, I think it's quite good, like one of the boys in my class... Well, when they play football outside, they name themselves different players but they've obviously learnt those players from watching football and things like that. And there's one boy in my class that can name you every badge in the Premiership and Championship League. And I said, well, how have you learnt how to do that? And he said from clicking through photos online.

Q [Overtalking], yes. Very good, thank you. So I want to look at new technologies, play, creativity and learning now. And so we're interested in exploring how play with technology supports children in learning new skills and knowledge or if it forms a barrier.

And we've kind of been talking about this anyway, but it's really to dig into that a little bit more. So I wonder particularly about how you see your own role in terms of supporting them to learn the skills, to build knowledge and to be creative – three things, a big question – with media, with technologies.

A I think it's important for teachers as a whole to be up to date with what is out there



and what different sites there are and stuff. Because if you're just using the same thing every single year, then are you really benefiting the children? Are you up to date?

So I like to, before I do a lesson, research what different people used, is there anything that I've used in the past that I can bring in, and stuff like that. If we're learning a new skill, especially if it's in ICT, like I said we're moving onto in the new year where we're going to be drawing shapes and things, I've decided that they're going to somehow try and create their own face using shapes.

Which will obviously be a step by step process. So that'll be a lot of me modelling how do I select the different tools and drawing them – is that accurate? Like a colour for my hair, for example. The shape of the face, is it more like an oval? Have you got more of a square face? And things like that, and getting them to have that discussion about being able to... Like would you use a rectangle for your face? No. Why not, kind of thing – being able to reason for the different things.

But obviously that'll be more of a, I do it, now you go and do it and we'll come back together. So it would be more of a step by step rather than me giving them 5,000 different things, all in one go instructions, and then them having to try and remember it. Because I think if it's broken down, they've got more likelihood of them being able to do it themselves after.

Q Do you see yourself ever...? Are you ever playful with technology? Can you be spontaneous? Or are there constraints that make that a bit difficult in the classroom?

A It's hard to be... There's been many times where I've thought, oh, we could go and research this, but because we haven't got the Chromebooks or the iPads handy to our class, yes, we are restricted because we don't have the access to them. Obviously we've got my computer that's in my class, so we can all see what I'm doing on my computer. But it's nice for them to be able to search things for themselves or, right, you've got a question – excellent, write it down – can you go and find the answer for me? There've been loads of times where I'd love to be able to do that but we just can't. Yes.

Q Yes. That's interesting. So you're giving them instruction, giving them prompts, that sort of thing.

A Yes.

Q And you've explained that you can't, in a way, be open-ended perhaps.

A Yes.

Q Because it's not perhaps...

A It's not there, yes.

Q It's not there, and also, perhaps, they're not always at the stage where they can do it.

A Yes. There'd be some children in my class that straightaway, if I asked them to go and search for something, they wouldn't be able to do it because they don't have the foundation skills to be able to do it yet.

Q Yes, that's really interesting. The other thing we're interested in is the range of emotions that go with using technologies and engaging with media. And you talked earlier about the excitement...

A Yes.

Q That that generation was partly why I asked you a bit about that. But I also wondered, are there other emotions that you can remember and pick up on that you're seeing?

A Yes, frustration – a lot of frustration. Especially at the start of the year when we had to go back to basics, simple things like logging in and logging off – there were a lot of children that you could see them getting frustrated which then obviously led to them crying, trying...

And we do have a few children in my class that have autistic tendencies, so we have to be more aware of those when we're doing certain things and thinking, is that going to be a trigger for them? Because once they... We've got one boy that refuses to use a Chromebook at all because he just says that he can't do it.

And even if you do it with him, he will just refuse and he won't even look at what you're doing. So he's one of those that has to use an iPad. So then I have to be more creative with how am I still going to provide those skills for him on this type of technology when everybody else is using something different?

But yes, you definitely see a lot of frustration or... Not panic but they give up easy. So if they can't do something once, they'll be like, Miss, I can't do it. And then it's just like, try it again. And then they'll type it in again and be like, okay, I've done it. So it's almost like if they feel like it's not worth their time, they'll just give up. So, yes.

Q Right, yes. So there's a resilience, persistence thing going on.

A Yes.

Q And why won't he...? The lad you mentioned, where is the barrier for him? Is it about typing it in correctly? Is that for the log in specifically or is there more to that?

A He's just very particular. He likes things to be the way... In a routine. So he uses an iPad at home. So if I said to him, can we use a Chromebook today, he would straight out say no. But I think he has it in his head that he can't do it and he doesn't have that willingness to try and do something new.

So I've tried to model it a few times where I'll be like, right, okay, I'm going to get my Chromebook out today. So I'll start typing on the Chromebook and you can see that he's interested. He's like, oh, Miss is using one, and then he'll think about it and I'm like, do you want to come and use my Chromebook? And then he'll be like, no, I want an iPad. So yes, we've definitely got a bit of a barrier with him but...

Q Yes, no, it's really interesting to hear because they're individuals.

A Yes.

Q Everyone has their own response to technologies, so yes.

A Yes. A lot of children are excited where some find that they prefer to use the iPads because they think that it's more cool to use an iPad or they think it's more exciting to use an iPad rather than the Chromebook. I don't know if it's the way that they look or they've just got that thing in their head where it's more current, kind of thing, so it's the things that you use at home.

So yes, they definitely get the excitement of like, oh, I want to use this, but there's definitely a handful of children in my class that are a bit more reluctant, are a bit more cautious when they're using it because they're not entirely sure if they're doing it right or... Yes.

Q Do you ever cultivate a playful approach to it as well, that it's not a serious task. That it's not necessarily an educational goal but let's just have a bit of fun with this, let's try and be creative – is there any kind of room for that?

A Yes. So like what we're doing next week – I'm going to bring down the Chromebooks and stuff like that, so they'll get free rein of what they want to do on it – so hopefully that will spur them on to start wanting to use it a bit more because they realise that I don't just use my Chromebook for like Miss wants me to find this out or I need to try and find the answers to this or create something on here. It'd be quite nice for them to actually use it for their own free will and they're like, oh, I can actually do this on here. So hopefully, that will...

Q Yes, something a bit more exploratory, yes.

A Yes.

Q Do they get to use it in Golden Time and stuff like that or...?

A We don't really do Golden Time.

Q Oh, okay, so it's...

A So we do a thing called OTIS time which is where it's based on attendance. So each week, it goes on how many children have been late, how many children have been off school. You get a certain amount of minutes. So on average, ours tend to earn about 11 minutes a week.

So they get given the option every week if they want to use their OTIS time that week or whether they want to save it. More often than not, they want to save it for the end of term where they can have... Last time, they decided – they voted and they did a movie afternoon. This time when we voted, they've decided they want a board games, colour in and IT afternoon. So that's what we're going to do.

Q So what would you put in the IT afternoon?

A That's, like I said, when I'm just going to bring down their...

Q That's this.

A The Chromebooks and the iPads for them, so they've got that option. So there'll be set up in the classroom different stations. So they'll have a colour in station, they'll have the Chromebooks and the iPads, and then they'll have... They're all going to

bring in boardgames and stuff like that, so that'll be quite nice for them to do. But it'll be so they're not fighting over it, it'll be like they rotate.

Q Rotate.

A Yes.

Q So what sort of thing will be on the Chromebooks that they could do [overtalking]?

A Obviously they always have access for their TT Rock Stars. There's games that they've played on there before. They've asked me if they can play the games that we play in Maths and stuff like that, which is quite nice.

Q Yes. That's good, yes.

A So yes, there'll be several different options for them. I'll load them up there.

Q Brilliant. That's great, thank you. Just one more thing I wanted to ask about. Again, it's a list of stuff. But, so it's understanding how technology might develop physical skills. We talked a bit about social but here's the list, so I'm just going to put that there. But I don't know if you've got any kind of thoughts around some of these things – social, physical, cognitive, creative, emotional?

A I've got one boy in my class who's got really poor motor skills. So watching him use a Chromebook and things, it's actually been helping him strengthen his fingers and his coordination which is really nice. So I've seen, yes, at the start of the year, he found it very difficult to be able to type things, whereas now, he can use multiple fingers to be able to do it which is really good.

Q Interesting. Can I just ask, do you use the GoNoodle that I've heard about and things like that?

A Yes.

Q Yes, so that's a movement thing, isn't it, encouraging...?

A Yes. So we use GoNoodle, Just Dance and other things like that, and I do meditation videos. But yes, they're mostly techniques for if I think they need a bit of cooling down moment, a bit of a refresh.

Q Can you tell me what you use for the...? I've not heard about the meditation ones. What would you use for that?

A So it's like mindfulness, so there's loads of different activities for the children to do. So they basically copy what's on a screen. So it could be different yoga actions, so doing Cosmic(?) Yoga, or it could be stuff that tells a story but it gets them to do actions to it. So one of them was painting a rainbow and then there was a raincloud, so they showed the different actions and things like that and it just got them thinking. It took their mind of what was happening around them because they had to focus. So they're quite nice.

Q Where do you get these resources? Is it a particular website or...?

A I don't know what the website is called because I've just got it saved on my computer. But yes, you can just find them online.

- Q So again, it's something you've searched up yourself and... Yes.
- A Yes, something that I've just found. But then after talking about it, some of the other classes, they use similar things as well, so yes.
- Q That's very interesting. Yes, so something about the emotional wellbeing and psychological wellbeing comes in there.
- A Yes, and it just gets them to calm down. It'd be especially good when obviously we're moving towards SATs and things like that...
- Q Yes, of course, yes.
- A To get them a bit more peaceful.
- Q We can all do with that. Brilliant. Any other things you want to speak to here, creative skills or social?
- A Creative skills they've not really been exposed to yet. That might come obviously out of the India when they're creating their own programmes and things like that. But yes, they mostly just use the technology to play games, to research things at their age and stuff like that. Some of my children do imaginative play but that's not running at the moment because the woman who was doing it has left. So they did do some of that.
- Q What, with technology, do you mean, or...?
- A I really don't know.
- Q No. Was it something she took them out of the class to do?
- A Yes. So they used to go out just after break time and they'd go off and do it. And I know that sometimes, I saw them outside in the grass area, so I don't know if they were collecting things.
- Q Oh, right, so that was like a guided play thing.
- A Yes.
- Q So you've got two of our case study children, I think, in your class, haven't you?
- A Yes.
- Q And so I just wondered, thinking about them as individuals as well, how they use digital tools that you provide them with in the classroom, each of them.
- A The two children are actually really capable.
- Q Yes, we can refer to them by name because they'll be anonymising these, so...
- A Yes. So Alison, she uses technology a lot at home. From when she brings things in from home learning, you can tell obviously. When you've asked her about, oh, how have you found this, she's researched it online or her mum's looked at something with her online. So she uses technology and she watches TV quite a bit at home. So... And I know her mum is really into Twitter. She's got ClassDojo obviously where she sends me stuff, pictures of what Alison is doing. So yes, she is definitely in a home-based environment where they're very technology used.

Q Yes, and you feel this coming through.

A Yes, definitely. Because she'll talk about, oh, I saw that on TV or, oh, I did... Or I played with this online or I found that by doing this. So yes, you can definitely tell with Alison. With Mallison, his home life is a bit more structured so he only really goes on things for a purpose rather than for play. So his will be like, oh, I've used the internet. So he was the child I was on about that came and brought back the whole script of the captain of the Titanic. That was Mallison.

So his mum is really making sure that he's using it for educational basis. So she's always making sure that, during the holidays and stuff, he's using TT Rock Stars. He's always the top one, used it the most, and stuff like that. Rarely, I've heard him talk about him playing on Fortnite like the other boys, and stuff like that. So I think it's very much steered in that way.

Q Has he mentioned Minecraft?

A Yes, I don't know. He's not mentioned that to me.

Q No, he hasn't. He's started to use that at home but I think he's still quite new to it.

A Yes.

Q So I wondered if that was emerging in his classroom practice, as it were. Thinking about the case study children, drawing on their experiences from home, but more in their play with technologies... And this is play with technologies but it doesn't sound like you do much playing.

A Yes.

Q It's a bit more purposed, as it were, in that way, but playful uses of technology.

A Yes, you definitely see their willingness to want to do it. They're definitely the children that I like. So for instance, when we were doing the VR stuff, they were very... Like, I've not done it yet. So they're very aware of that it's something that they want to do, it's something that they want to try. So I think from having that exposure at home and stuff like that, it's given them the oomph to want to do it in class and want to try these things, where I've got some of my class that are a bit more passive so they'd just be like, oh, I haven't had a go but it's fine.

Q Do you think there's a confidence about them?

A Yes, definitely, especially with Alison. She's more than happy to show... It's very frustrating sometimes. Instead of doing her own work, she'll be wanting to show other children how to do it and what to do.

So it's great that she feels the confidence that she understands it that well that she's then able to pass it onto the other children as well. So that's quite nice to see that, so that those children that would normally come up to me, she's always like, oh, I can help them, which is nice. But then sometimes I'm like, Alison, come on, get on with your own.

Q Oh, right. So the problem there is just that she's not actually focusing on her own thing.

A Yes, sometimes. So it's the thing with Alison, to try and get the right balance of, yes, you can help the person next to you but make sure you're doing yours at the same time. Because she's very much that she would like to help other people and just focus on them. Yes.

Q Yes. Is that true in the non-digital realm as well?

A Yes. In lessons, yes. It's quite interesting actually. When she's on the carpet during the input of a lesson, she's one of the children that's probably one of the most distracted. So she's continuously always looking around, what else is going on. But then, when you ask her a question, she's then able to snap back and answer it. So it's like she's still listening but she's still observing what's happening around her.

Q Yes. I get the sense possibly that Mallison is also someone who will help out with his peers. I don't know if that's something [overtalking].

A He'll help out if you ask him or if it's one of his friends. But if you placed him with a child that he wouldn't necessarily normally work with or is in his friendship group, then he'll be like, okay, and he'll do it but you can see that he's not got that eagerness like he would if it was his friend.

Q Yes. And the final questions is are there things we're not asking about that you feel are really important in this whole area of play, creativity and children's uses of technology?

A Not really, no. I think it's just a hard thing with the age group that they're at to be able to bring into everything. Because obviously we've got the interactive whiteboard that they get exposed to throughout the day. It would be nice to have that free time where they've got the chance to go and do other things. But with how packed the curriculums are, they don't really get that much opportunity to be able to do it. So I guess that'd be nice for them to be able to do.

Q Yes. You see that as something that perhaps money can't buy but it is [overtalking] space and time.

A Yes.

Q And what would you put in there? Just more open-ended exploratory things, is that what you're thinking?

A Yes, definitely. Probably in the topics and things, I could say, right, we're going to be moving on to looking at India, and then just giving them free rein of maybe some questions on the board. So how many different cities are there in India? What different cities are there? Because that'd be one of our focuses. Or do children in India go to school?

So things that they can relate to as well, so they can be thinking about in comparing their lifestyle to other people's and things like that. I think that'd be quite nice. Because then they've still got that free rein of how they search for it and how they're going to present it to me and stuff like that. But yes, I think the major barrier for mine is that it's hard to move onto those things because they don't know how to use the technology and we spend a lot of the time trying to teach them how to use it. Yes.



Q Yes, so it becomes a barrier for you as well.

A Yes.

Q Oh, brilliant, thank you so much, Sonia.