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A Bethan D (teacher at Meadow Banks Primary School)

Q We're starting off with questions relating to curriculum and pedagogy in your own practice. I just wondered if you could tell me a bit about the way that you use technology and media in your delivery of the curriculum and in your classroom?

A The main one is the interactive whiteboard, so we use that an awful lot. When we have whole class teaching time, it's the interactive whiteboard that's used and the children are invited up too, to come and join in with that. So there are opportunities to come up and move things around, manipulate things and also to write on there. That's how we use it mainly. Obviously, I've got my PC, which I use.

Q In the classroom?

A In the classroom, yes.

Q Because I imagine that you might also use one at home in your preparation.

A Yes, in the classroom and at home. And also I have a tablet that's used to take pictures of the children while they're working to post on ClassDojo. So the Dojo system is the interaction between the parents and me. I can let them see some of the things the children will be doing in the classroom and parents can also message me to ask questions or if they have any concerns out of school time, they can message me and I can get back to them at a convenient time. That works really well because it's an instant way of the parents being able to contact me directly and it helps.

Q It's another avenue that isn't email basically.

A Absolutely. In the morning time, it's quite a rush and if parents have got issues, it's sometimes very easy.

Q Yes, for both you and them to write it down at a time that's convenient.

A The other way for recording, assessing and things like that, we put a lot of things on shared Google Drive in school. It's not for the children's use, it's for my own personal use as a teacher.

Q And you share that with the other members of staff you're saying?

A Yes. We have also CPOMS system, which is our behaviour system in school. If there's any incidents, we post things on there.

Q Okay, great. So that sounds like quite a lot of technology interaction for yourself. Record-keeping and keeping up to date with everything there. But let's focus back on the classroom, the children's uses. You mentioned about their interaction with it in the classroom. Do you use it across the curriculum?

A Yes, across the curriculum. Everything. Usually some part of a lesson will be where the children come up and share their understanding, and demonstrate to the

class, so it feels that they've got ownership and it also shows me that they've understood whether we need to carry on and do some more examples.

Q Okay, yes, that's interesting. So they're coming up singly, presumably, to do this?

A Yes, sometimes you have team games. If we're doing one for a foreign language for example, and they're doing numbers, we can have splats and things on the board. Sometimes images of numbers or images of animals, depending on whatever it is we're learning about and then I'll say, ocho, for example, in Spanish and then the first one to find and spot the number, so we can use it in that way as well to play games.

Q Okay. Does splat mean, hit it with a pen or...?

A They just use their hands to cover it.

Q Right, yes.

A So that's another way of using the interactive whiteboard.

Q So does it cross over different types of learning, enquiry-based or problem solving? That sort of thing? Would you try and use it in different ways?

A Yes, absolutely. We use it a lot in maths for problem solving that way. I'm just thinking about how we use it to encourage the children to articulate responses, so we'll have sentence stems on the board for asking questions. And if there is something I want them to think about, deeper questioning, then we will give them the question and then the sentence stem, so they can articulate their answers a lot more easily. So we're developing that oracy in the classroom that way.

Q That's interesting. So how would you use that, would they be reading this or would you read it out and be referring to the system stem?

A Yes, exactly that. So we'd give them a talk task within the session and they would know it was a talk task. They could talk about it with a partner and then they know that when we come back together, they've got to phrase it in a certain way, their response, by using that sentence stem.

Q That's really interesting, so when it's the interactive whiteboard, I've got a picture of mainly the whole class with you, using that particular piece of technology. Is there ever any more smaller group stuff going on?

A Yes, absolutely. So if the children have shown me they've understood, then they can go on and get on independently. There might be a group on the carpet who need a little bit more input, at which point they might be showing me their understanding at that point, by using the interactive whiteboard or I might be using it as a teaching tool to further demonstrate for them. So it works both ways.

Q It's brilliant. So you've talked about ClassDojo and that was about taking the photos, wasn't it, as partly the communication between you and the parents? The photos that you put on there, are they just for the eyes of the parents not anyone else in the class could see? Do you have to just take it off that child? Are there rules around that or...?

A Nothing. Everyone that's signed up to Dojo, the images of their children can on

Dojo. So it's the class and there won't be any images of any other classes or children on there. It's purely for the parents of the children in my class. Obviously, we have Twitter. We put things on Twitter.

Q Someone just mentioned that. That's amazing. Yes, interesting.

A And then parents do sign to say whether they want their child to be on Twitter or not. We have to have consent.

Q Do you find there are barriers in that way? Are there some who prefer not?

A I think, from my point of view, it's normally most parents are willing to let their child be on Twitter. I think it's more the looked-after children, where we have to be careful. Most instances, the parents are fine.

Q It's been accepted, as it were.

A Yes, they quite like it too. I think they quite like seeing what's happening.

Q Yes, it's a whole new insight into their child's day, isn't it? And did you say you've got stuff coming back sometimes, from the parents as well?

A Yes, they send photos of things that they're doing at home. If they've been on trips. Things that the children can talk about which is great because then it gives us a bit more time to show a photograph and maybe, for some of the quieter children as well, it gives them an opportunity to talk and refer to something they can see that they've done. It's that real-life situation they've experienced. That can be very helpful.

Q So there's a kind of social and oracy skills element to this, using the images. Is it particularly images or would you use sound?

A No, it's usually just image.

Q That's interesting, yes. That's great, thank you. I wonder you aims in using the whiteboard and so on. It's there and it's a great resource, presumably but are there particular learning goals or anything that you'd want to mention you'd use it for? You've mentioned oracy particularly, is there anything else?

A I think it's ideal as a whole class teaching tool, mainly for me at least. It also gives me the opportunity and helps me build the confidence of the children by me seeing them having a go but them realising that they can do it too. So giving them those opportunities to come up to the front and demonstrate their knowledge.

Q Being the teacher.

A Yes, and then praising them. Obviously, inviting them to be the mini teachers who might have solved the, going deeper, task in maths or done the extra challenges. And being able to articulate how they worked it out and maybe show a method of that depending on what they were doing. That can be helpful too. So like you said, the mini teacher role and they absolutely love doing it too. In the confines of the classroom where they feel safe and everybody knows each other, and they've got no inhibitions in that sense. That's the perfect time to boost their confidence and make them they can feel like they can do and achieve.

- Q Do you feel like that technology has a particular role to play in this?
- A I think children are definitely very attracted to using it and they want to have a go. I think that is a way of pulling them in to their learning. Think about the old chalkboards. They've got images. We can show video clips. We can immerse children in different things, depending on what the hook is into their learning. It can be used in lots of different ways like that.
- Q Yes, so you'd use film as well?
- A Oh yes, absolutely.
- Q I presume that you'll say YouTube for some of your film materials but are there other websites or particular resources you might draw on?
- A Yes, we use The Literacy Shed quite a lot which is short animations. Normally with no talking, so the children can just watch a short animation and they can then write about it. So they're using their imaginations. There's not been any dialogue but they can choose their own story based on the images they've seen. So then we will take stills of the images they've seen in the video clip and then they can sequence their own story using the pictures.
- Q So it doesn't have to be in any particular order?
- A No, we give them the story board, in the sequence and then they'll go away and write their own story. So that's their way of showing the skills of the writing they've learnt up to a certain point and we can assess in that way as well. So it's a good assessment tool.
- Q How do you feel that rates, in terms of creativity?
- A I think it's brilliant.
- Q You've seen good results from it?
- A Yes, especially with children who haven't had as many experiences as other children in the classroom, who don't read as much, who can't read as well and don't have the times to lost in different worlds. That really helps them. Having seen the clip. Having the images there and then they can write about it and you see such a difference in writing through that way.
- Q In terms of their own uses of technology, would you use iPads or anything like that in the classroom or is it more that you're mainly interacting with the whiteboard?
- A Not really, no. Not yet, this year, in this class.
- Q Is this because they're not ready or not the resource there?
- A Not really, I think it's the resources because the ICT suite is normally booked out at various time slots. It's very tricky to get the iPads to do something creative with outside of that slot you have each week. If we had more iPads in the school that we could use in that way, then I would be more adventurous with it.
- Q Do you have a desire, suppose you could have anything you wished in terms of resource or funding for something. What would be your hope to [overtalking], in

your class?

A I think it would be great to have a set of iPads or Chromebooks for the year group. I know that some year groups have got access in school and others haven't. And we are, unfortunately, one of the ones that don't. But if other year groups aren't using them, we can ask to use them. They're quite protective of their equipment.

Q Is this the Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2, type of difference?

A Key Stage 2 do have Chromebooks. Year 3 have a set between them. Year 4 and Year 6, on the top corridor have a set to use. Year 5, downstairs, have a set. We feel a little bit left out really.

Q Do you have any particular thing you've seen that you're attracted to try out, supposing you had the iPads for your class?

A I'd like to set up QR codes around the place and get the children to go and find information. Scan them. I think that would be really good to use them in that way. I've also used Muse which I think's great for moderation. I've seen them used in schools for recording a child reading, so it's evidence to show the level they're at. Showing that fluency and things like that which, as a Year 2 teacher because it's a SATs year. We need to say why they're at this level. It would be a good piece of evidence to have that recorded and a QR code, that someone could just come along and listen, and hear that child's voice reading. I've seen that in other schools.

Q So it's a peer thing? They're hearing their peers talk but it's anonymous.

A Yes. Just the voice of a child.

Q That's interesting. So you'd use it as a way to get them thinking about fluency and understandability. The way they read and intonation patterns, and things.

A Yes.

Q In terms of taking those photographs that you share with the parents. Is that always done by an adult in the room?

A It's done by me.

Q It's done by you. I didn't want to presume.

A I'm in charge of the Dojo.

Q The whole thing, yes, okay.

A It's run by me and obviously, I can access Dojo straight from my tablet.

Q So you just upload it straight away?

A So I can quickly just upload it.

Q Do they ever ask you to take a photo, 'can you take a picture of this, Miss'?

A Yes, sometimes because they're proud of what they've done. Sometimes I try and whizz around and get everybody, as a snapshot of what we've been doing. It

depends on the time as well. As you can imagine, a classroom is extremely busy and I haven't used Dojo in that way for a while, just because of time limitations. I am always conscious that I want to use it. I use it a lot at the start of the year and there's been a little bit of a drought of me posting things but I do try. I think with the workload, sometimes it's hard to keep up with it all.

Some things have to go and that's probably not a priority. Although for parents and as a parent who has a child, who also signs up to Dojo, I really appreciate seeing images, to see what's happening in school. It's great. It's wonderful. I'm a big advocate of using it myself to share information with parents in that way.

Q Yes, that's really interesting. Perhaps another thing you'd like to have is a bit more time to be able to use it, to record what's going on. Both for something that acknowledges their achievement, as well as something that would also help you to report and assess, and evaluate.

A And also when children go home, their parents ask them about their day. Most of the time they say nothing. If you've got the image or you've got a message. Look, you can have that conversation can't you.

Q Yes, exactly. Thank you. Let's pop over to looking at any concerns you have and your own perspectives. Do you think any technologies or media are particularly negative for children? If so, which ones and why? You're shaking your head, that's a, no.

A No, I don't really.

Q Do you have any concerns about data privacy or internet safety in general? Does that come up for you, as a teacher?

A It hasn't yet but obviously, within school, certain things are blocked, so children are as safe as they can be. With apps and things, and obviously as part of our PSHE curriculum, we need to talk about internet safety, so that would cover that in school anyway. And if something has come up, which has been Sheffield-wide, where there's been incidents of things that happen. We need to alert the children and then we need to speak to our classes. I think we deal with things pretty well, as a school, if there are concerns.

Q Yes, that's something that will probably come down from leadership, quite often, drawing your attention to these things.

A With leadership, sometimes it happens with children higher up the school, who might be on the technology more than children at the age I teach, who might come across things or there have been instances between others. In Year 6, they tend to get their first mobile phone because it's the next step to go to comp [comprehensive school]. So it could be messages, we need to have that talk about, should we be sending messages that we wouldn't want to receive ourselves and those kinds of things. There might be some issues happening amongst friends in the year group.

Through the PSHE curriculum, it's to keep making sure that we're at the forefront. With ICT as well, if we have that time in ICT lessons, to talk about cyber bullying and being safe online.

Q As part of PSHE, in your Year 2 class, would those sorts of issues come in there?

A Yes.

Q And you would cover those, as well as further at school where they're getting the actual phones. Feeding it in sooner.

A Yes, absolutely.

Q Do you do anything with the parents or is it more focused through the children when they're in school? Are there any things that are aimed at the parents, that the school might do?

A I don't know if we've done any workshops with parents on that?

Q I just wondered if that was the case.

A I'm not sure, to be honest. Possibly. I know of newsletters and things we might say we are.

Q Do you think that children's use of technology, either in school or out of school has any impact on other parts of the school day and children's life in school?

Break times, wet play, golden times, non-curricula times. Do you see any impact of that with the ones you teach or indeed supervise, at other points in the day?

A It's difficult really because I don't know about the home lives of all the children in my class, so I don't know how much time they're spending on iPads or tablets, or computers and their parent's phones, maybe playing games? It's a difficult one. I certainly know that it's harder and harder to encourage the children to want to open a book and read at home. And I think that is because technology has taken over and I think it's also because parents are incredibly busy, doing other things. Sometimes, they just don't have the time to sit down and do the kind of things that maybe I'd traditionally done, as a child.

With my own children, I'm very aware of the fact that I don't want them to spend as much time on technology. I'd hope that parents would try and monitor and limit the time the children have on technology at home. I think a lot of parents use it as a way of being able to do what they want to do and keeping their children quiet, to be honest. Unfortunately, I feel like that it is used quite a lot in that way.

Q Yes. Is that particularly the age group that you teach do you feel or others as well?

A I think that maybe some of the children in my class, will have family backgrounds like that, yes.

Q Yes, that's interesting. We haven't mentioned good old television or films and stuff like that but obviously, I'm wondering about technology, as well as things like iPads or phones, where they might be accessing TV and things like that now. Okay. Do you have any examples or knowledge of internet enabled toys that children might talk about or relate to? Think robots or things that connect to the internet and through the Wi-Fi and things like that. Has that ever come up in your class? Are you aware of or you don't use anything like that? Do you use any of the Bee-Bots or anything like that, coding type things?



- A I have used Bee-Bots in the past. Not with this class, this year yet but I have used them in the past.
- Q Yes, okay. And how do you find that goes with the age group that you teach?
- A Yes, they've enjoyed using them. They really enjoy programming them and seeing which they're going. It's a good way of talking about direction with them as well. So it's covering another maths topic at the same time.
- Q Yes, that's great. Presumably programmes like Scratch and things like that, is it harder for you to access because you haven't got the devices in your classroom? Would that be right?
- A True but I have used Scratch before with other classes.
- Q Is that the same year group?
- A When I've been teaching other year groups. We've used the Light Bot as well.
- Q So are they...?
- A Light Bot it's called.
- Q Oh, yes.
- A We've used that too. They've enjoyed doing that. I think it just depends a lot on the age group. This particular year, I haven't used those things with yet.
- Q Moving on to questions about new technology as play, creativity and learning. We're interested in exploring how play with technology supports children in learning new skills and knowledge or if it can be a barrier to those things? Are the technologies and media that you use or the approach you adopt, explicitly linked to the curriculum things that you're covering or learning outcomes? We've sort of touched on this a little bit already because it's particularly through the interactive whiteboards.
- A Yes. I think everything I plan is set up to cover the objectives of what the children need to learn or what I want them to explore. Yes, I would say, yes.
- Q So you're covering the ICT curriculum, as it were, through its use across all the curriculum areas.
- A Yes.
- Q Lovely. And how would you see your own role with children and facilitating their use of technology that you do use in the classroom? Are you in the role of guiding? Are you co-playing with them? How do you see your role as the adult, as the teacher?
- A Especially at this age, it's building up the independence. Just doing the simple things of first and foremost, being able to log on.
- Q Yes, I heard quite a lot about that today from others.
- A Logging on and remembering passwords because there are some children that happily go on and use all the different things that we set up. Oh, I haven't



mentioned Spelling Shed. So we have Spelling Shed as well and the children practise their spelling. They've got a log in for Spelling Shed. They've got a log in for Times Table Rockstar and a log in for Sumdog. At the start of the year, they're given their username and passwords, and parents are given a pack with everything in it the child needs for home. I have had conversations with some parents and I'm going off your point a little bit here.

Q No, that's fine.

A I have had conversations with some parents, saying they don't want their child on technology. I'm sorry, they're not going to go on because I don't believe they should. So I've said, that's absolutely fine and I've explained that, you know, ten minutes a day, to do some times table work and to learn some Spanish would really benefit your child. And they have let them go on now and it has made a difference, and I think they've seen that.

Q That's interesting, yes.

A The positive impact it's had but I can understand because I think really, we've all been through that unsure stage with technology. I'm generalising a little bit here but from a personal point of view, I feel that as soon as things started coming home. The new book reading scheme, rather than having a book to take home, this is in my own children's school. All of sudden, they've got to do their reading online on Book Club, it's called. That worried me and then lots of parents said, hang on. The children aren't supposed to have tablets at bed time.

Why are we now encouraging them to read a story, on the screen and then answer questions? It should be that nice time. You're reading to your mum or dad and they're asking questions. It shouldn't be, anyway, that's another issue.

Q But it's interesting because I can see that that's informing, a little bit, what you do in your other practice as a teacher.

A Yes, definitely.

Q It's another experience. It's another window on other practices.

A In some respects, it's good that it's there because the children have got a choice of books. In some ways, it entices children who wouldn't normally pick up a book to take home to read or it wouldn't be able to get lost in their blue bag. The fact that they can log on to something to read. I can see the positives there and then teachers can check to see what they've read, and keep a track of their comprehension. I can see the pluses but then I can also see...

Q You've got some reservations.

A Yes.

Q Yes, that's really interesting.

A Sorry, could you go back to the question you asked me?

Q It was really what you see your own role as a teacher being, in terms of helping the children and guiding them in relation to technology?

- A I suppose for me, it's like anything, it's showing, modelling, demonstrating and then hoping they can then become independent in that way. Then obviously the children that are more independent, can help the less dependent. So the key is, it becomes less of me doing all the time but they can do it, so they can show their peers. It's rolling it out that way, as much as possible.
- Q Do you find it's effective when it's peer-to-peer as well as teaching?
- A Definitely, yes. And lots of children ask me, can I go and help?
- Q Do they?
- A If we get to the end of work, in anything we do, it's can I go and help? I say, of course you can.
- Q Yes, that's lovely. We're interested in what the range of emotions is that you might see around technology use in your classroom?
- A I think you saw today, one child who was really struggling with the times tables.
- Q Oh, right.
- A There are those children who struggle with reading and I think that closes up their chances of being successful so much because even though they can find their way around things. It's still tricky for them. It takes them longer to log in. It takes them longer to spell Meadow Banks. It's hard but once they're in, then we're doing something called Times Table Rock Stars and if you can't count in twos, fives and tens, which is the first set of numbers. Then that limits you too. It's taking a long time to count with having to do it very slowly and then the times up, and this is what happened today.
- The five, four, three, two, one, the game is over and unfortunately, that looks like red alerts. I've not had enough time. This is why this boy got so angry today. Ran off and bent his glasses in half.
- Q Oh, no. I didn't see any of that because I was only observing Saskia in the lesson.
- A I think it can be frustrating. Obviously, for some children, it's not that hard. It's being challenged. Yes, it's helping me, it's helping them. They recognise that eventually it becomes automatic pilot. Saskia was achieving today because she just knew. She had practised so many times. Whereas, with some children, it takes that much longer. Seeing that, five, four, three, two, one, just sends them into, oh, it's not fair.
- Q A bit of a panic, yes.
- A I've only got ten points or maybe I haven't got any.
- Q And is there an issue around other children being able to see what you've got and things like that, do you find?
- A Not really. The children aren't like that. They won't go around and say, oh, you haven't got any.
- Q They're there just for themselves.

- A For themselves, yes, for their own esteem and unfortunately, it's those lower-achieving children where the gap is widening and they're the ones who find it tricky.
- Q So you don't actually feel that it's all that beneficial for them? That it's set up on the notion of a bit of a friendly competition?
- A Yes, some things. It depends what we're using. If we were doing the spelling programme, for example, and they're spelling the ones they we're learning, that would be different because they can find the letters, they need to spell a word. I think with maths, it's trickier.
- Q Is it always done against timing or can you switch that off and can you show a child how to switch that off, so that it took the pressure away? And really, the thing was just to get them to engage with learning.
- A To my knowledge, it's always done with a timer, as far as I know.
- Q Yes, I would be a bit on edge doing my maths to a timer. No, I just wondered. Just finally, may I ask you some questions about Saskia herself?
- A Yes, of course.
- Q Obviously, we've been working with her family. There are loads of questions, so we're just going to touch on one or two. I just wondered, if you'd like to comment in any way, you've touched on it already, re this class that I just observed her in this morning. She was very able at the Times Table Rock Star session that you had but I wondered, generally, of your sense of her engagement with technologies in your classes?
- A Yes, absolutely. I think because she's very curious and wants to learn, and she's got that instilled in her, that's her nature. I think she likes the challenge of technology. She likes using it. She's interested to find out more. She wants to do well. She's very independent. She tends to be shown something and then she knows and if she has a blip, then we can quickly talk about it and she'll know. She'll come to me and ask me questions but she'll move on very quickly from having a stumbling block, if you like.
- Q She doesn't get stuck?
- A No.
- Q That's very interesting.
- A She's a very able girl across the board and she loves school, and she loves learning.
- Q Yes. Can you recall any times where you got a sense that she's perhaps bringing interactions with technologies and media that she's got from home? Not just using an iPad or playing games on that. Film or popular culture? Do you get any of that sense coming into the classroom?
- Anything she might have contributed or has passions about it?
- A I don't know, really? I'm not sure. I don't think so.

- Q I think you mentioned earlier, you don't have a strong sense of, that's what they do with technologies and things at home.
- A No, not really.
- Q Is that something you'd like to know? Do you think it would be helpful to know more about or is it not needed, perhaps?
- A Well, I suppose so. I mean, I know that most of them have got access to be able to use the things they need to. We set up to help in their learning.
- Q Yes, of course you've set up for them.
- A So I know that much but as far as how much time they spend on these things at home, outside of doing those things I've asked them to do. If they do them at all, they're the question marks. I suppose it would be interesting to know more about that.
- Q I was wondering about the role of parents with children in the home. Whether you feel there's any significance in understanding more about that world of what goes on. Where the teachers, not specific to your class, but do you think there could be any benefit or negative effects of knowing what's happening in the home? What parents do with media in the home. How the children might be engaged with that?
- A Definitely.
- Q Yes, good. Thank you. I want to finish and come back on some creativity really and whether you notice any instances and examples of Saskia, or indeed, anyone else in the class, where they've done something you hadn't expected? Unexpectedly creative, let's say, with the way they've responded to a chance to show stuff on the whiteboard or to contribute to the class, in terms of what they might have done at home, or something like that with the technology?
- A We do projects. Topic work. Saskia has brought in, as have other children, things they've done at home. For example, she might have typed up a newspaper report linked to the Great Fire of London. She'll have used technology in that way and other children too, have done the same or they might have written some facts down. They've found pictures to cut, copy and paste into that presentation as well. Yes, there's definitely use of technology in that way, to be creative.
- Q Do they sometimes do that spontaneously, without you setting that?
- A Well we give them a homework grid with suggestions and they can use the suggestions or do anything at all that they would like to. That's to get their creative juices flowing.
- Q Yes, that's really interesting. Thank you. I wonder if there's anything else that we haven't touched on that you feel we should be looking at and thinking about, in relationship to the concerns of the study or your own experiences as a teacher, using technology on a very regular basis in the classroom or indeed, as a parent?
- A I can't think of anything right now?
- Q Thank you so much.