

Northern Grid / BECTA Video Conferencing Project

BACKGROUND:

Name of Participating Schools:

The Oak Tree Primary in Stockton-on-Tees

<http://www.oaktree.stocktontrain.net/pages/viewpage.asp?unqid=268>

&

St Aidan's Primary School in Hartlepool

<http://www.staidans.info/>



Location:

Stockton-on-Tees & Hartlepool. The Oak Tree is a large school in a socially deprived area. St. Aidan's opened in 1926 as a memorial to the 100 former pupils and one teacher of the original St. Aidan's School who lost their lives during the First World War. The school's logo is St Aidan's torch and this logo can be seen in many places within the school. A Nursery was opened in 1993. The school benefits from an extensive playing field. The school is situated in Loyalty Road in Hartlepool and caters for children in the 4 to 11 age range. The school is the largest 'Church Aided School' in the Diocese of Durham. According to the 2005 PANDA the school is well below the national average in terms of high social class households.

Size:

The Oak Tree: 450 on roll, 45 Staff (approx); St. Aidan's: 411 including Nursery, 16 teachers, 16 teaching assistants, deputy headteacher and headteacher.

Type:

Primary.

Other Participants:

N/A.

Equipment:

Logitech QuickCam 4000 and Polycom PVX software (V 6.0.1) - supplied by Northern Grid.

Context:

- ☆ **Oak Tree:** To use Video Conferencing to extend multicultural links, possibly links with schools in France and to provide children with wider opportunities.
- ☆ **St. Aidan's:** After obtaining the ICT Mark we saw Video Conferencing as an opportunity to extend our current ICT curriculum. We hope to be able to connect with local, then national, then international schools. We expect that children across our school will be very enthusiastic about using webcams. We hope that Video Conferencing will not only raise standards in Literacy and Numeracy but also enhance our school 'Excellence and Enjoyment' agenda.



TECHNICAL INSTALLATION AND SET UP:

Type of Equipment Used:

- ☆ Polycom PVX (V6.0.1) Video Conferencing software;
- ☆ Logitech QuickCam 4000 with built in microphone;
- ☆ Speakers, headsets and portable microphones;
- ☆ Laptop & Promethean Whiteboard which is Networked (Oak Tree);
- ☆ Desktop Dell PC - Pentium IV, 2.79GHz, 512MB running on Windows XP. Networked. Troubleshooting problems corrected by Durham Technical Support and Northern Grid. Hartlepool Local Authority firewall initially blocked Video Conferencing. Use of SMART Interactive Whiteboard with surround speakers.

Layout and Location of Video Conferencing Area (see attached digital images):

- ☆ **Oak Tree:** Classroom, staffroom anywhere with an available interactive whiteboard. Using a group of approx 23 children.
- ☆ **St. Aidan's:** Use of a dedicated room, namely Planning, Preparation and Assessment Room. Room has black out blinds, surround sound, office furniture and very plain magnolia walls. Room used during lesson time and **ONLY** for pupils in 'Video Conferencing Project'. Small groups of children used; no more than 8 at a time (children from Year 4 and Year 5 - mixed ability).

Problems Encountered and Solutions Developed with the above:

- ☆ JVCS registration, QA testing, not yet completed for both schools. E164 numbers used for direct calls.
- ☆ St. Aidan's needed to contact Local Authority ICT manager Neil Whitehouse to allow access beyond firewall. Software could not be installed at first; due to conflict with Windows 2000 Server. Problem solved by Durham Technical Support.

VIDEO CONFERENCING PARTNERS:

Who?

- ☆ The Oak Tree Primary in Stockton-on-Tees.
- ☆ 00440210812001101 (E164 Number).
- ☆ St. Aidan's Church of England Memorial Primary School in Hartlepool (future partner - Saltburn Primary School). All partners will initially be cost free!
- ☆ 00440211093320101 (E164 Number).

Where?

Local.

How contacted?

Via Northern Grid Video Conferencing introduction.

Other Communication Channels apart from the Video Conference:

E-mail, Recorded DVD, Mobile Phone and Telephone.

Other Schools or Other Institutions:

N/A.

WHAT YOU DID:

Curriculum Focus:

Literacy focus, working on persuasive writing a Year 4 (Key Stage 2) text level objective namely: T25 - *to design an advertisement, such as a poster or radio jingle on paper or screen, e.g. for a school fête or an imaginary product, making use of linguistic and other features learnt from reading examples.* Activity aimed at Level 3B+ pupils.

How the activity fits to work pupils are already doing:

Children had completed a weeks worth of work on persuasive writing and had written their radio jingles as part of this. The idea was to share the radio (video) jingles with their partner school in order to improve speaking and listening and promote enthusiasm for writing.

Actual Video Conferencing Activity:

Brief introductory Video Conference so that the children could become familiar with the webcam and each other. Children asked general questions about the school and likes/dislikes:

- ☆ What is your name? Where is your school? How many children are there in your class? Do you attend any after school clubs? What is your favourite subject? What is your favourite football team? What do you think of your school dinners? What do you have? What is the best thing about your school? What is the worst thing about your school?

Follow up Video Conference children performed their radio (video) jingles to one another and commented on what they liked.

Aims and Objectives of the Conference(s):

To have a play/test with the equipment and give the children a new purpose and audience for their work.

What the Teacher/Pupils did:

Preparation: ensure children understood what was expected of them in terms of presenting via Video Conferencing. Children had to prepare written work and practice speaking and listening for their LIVE performance. Work part of daily Literacy lesson. St. Aidan's pupils presented their findings at a Hartlepool Conference in front of Mel Philipson, Manager of Northern Grid. Conference based on 'What has Broadband done for St. Aidan's?' Children performed script (see below).



EVIDENCE OF ACTIVITY:

Written Evidence after Video Conference I ✓

★ **Children talk about Video Conferencing:**

Hartlepool Video-Conferencing Case Study - Part 1

In our school we have a webcam that costs about £40 that we use to talk with other children in other schools. The webcam lives in a room which is called the PPA room. The reason we decided to use this room was because it is very quiet and it has an interactive whiteboard connected to a brand new computer. By the way the camera has not yet been used to record what the teachers get up to during their PPA time. The webcam is very easy to use all we have to do is type in a very, very, very, very long number. Our video conferencing number is: 00440211093320101. Now you can contact us if you can remember our number. The first place we contacted was the Northern Grid office in Gateshead to see if the webcam was working. We got a shock when a man called Mark Vinnicombe answered our call and appeared on our Interactive Whiteboard. Mark was the person who set-up our webcam by installing FREE Polycom Software. He also made sure the Hartlepool firewall did not stop our webcam working. We are 1 of 17 primary schools involved in a Northern Grid video-conferencing project.

Hartlepool Video-Conferencing Case Study - Part 2

Next we used our webcam to video conference with our partner school in Stockton-on-Tees. The school is called Oak Tree Primary School. The school dialled us so we had to wait to answer. When the school dialled us we heard a bleeping sound. We simply pressed a button and an ENTIRE Year 4 class appeared on our Interactive Whiteboard. It was strange to see other children in another school. We caught our first glimpse of their displays, uniform and teacher. Their teacher was called Miss. Davies.

We decided to have our webcam directed at one of us at a time. We used a microphone connected to the computer and a pair of speakers. We used speakers rather than a headset so that everyone could hear what was said. It was great having the Interactive Whiteboard as we could then see the other class really clearly. Each person then asked a few questions about their school. They then asked us a few questions. We had to be very quiet when it was not our turn. We learnt a lot about their school and their hobbies, for example they have many after school activities such as dancing, ICT, netball, tennis and basketball.

It was very strange using a webcam. We had to learn to look at the webcam and not at the person we were talking to. The software we used allowed us to see ourselves and the other school. We had to speak very clearly into the microphone and listen carefully for a reply. I felt very nervous at first in case I made a mistake. The view of the other class was very clear and we could hear what they said quite easily. It was funny at one point when one of their pupils talked really loudly into the microphone we got a shock! It was interesting that their teacher passed the microphone to one child after another whilst we moved around a table to the microphone. Sometimes we could not hear them as their microphone was not next to their mouth.

Hartlepool Video-Conferencing Case Study - Part 3

The next time we are going to contact Oak Tree is to persuade them to buy an imaginary product. They will also try to persuade us to buy their imaginary product. Our video advert will include props and different accents and dialects. We will be preparing work in Literacy. I think it is much better to write something for a real purpose and audience rather than just writing in my exercise book. As another teacher and lots of children will hear my work I know I have to work even harder. I also have to practice speaking clearly.

In the future we want to use video-conferencing to contact other schools in other countries or to be taught by other teachers. We also think our teachers could teach children in other schools or even teach us whilst we stay home in bed.

Hartlepool Video-Conferencing Case Study - Part 4

Finally our tips for using a webcam:

- 1) Speak slowly and clearly.
- 2) Look into the web-cam.
- 3) Be polite and well dressed (remember to comb your hair).
- 4) You need to listen to what the other people say.
- 5) Be prepared.
- 6) Be confident.
- 7) Enjoy what you are doing.
- 8) Hold the microphone close to your mouth.
- 9) Don't be silly.
- 10) Work as a team as you are representing your school!



EVIDENCE OF ACTIVITY:

Written Evidence after Video Conference II ✓

☆ The script from the Video Conference.

Introduction:

Hello Oak Tree Primary, It is really good to see you again. We are really excited to show you our adverts. Some are based on imaginary products and some are based on everyday food items. Would you like to go first?

(OAK TREE ADVERTS)

Thank you, your adverts were great.

Now for ours.

Firstly Rhian and Rachel will try to convince you to buy their lollipop.

1) Lollipops

Rachel: Are your lollipops only one flavour?

Rhian: (groaning) of course.

Rachel: Well why don't you, I SAY WHY DON'T YOU try a scrummy-yummy, mouth-watering, delicious, gorgeous, lip smacking, scrumptious, Smithy...lollipop?

Rhian: What is so good about it?

Rachel: Did you not hear me, I SAY DID YOU NOT HEAR ME? WHY DON'T YOU try a scrummy-yummy, mouth-watering, delicious, gorgeous, lip-smacking, scrumptious, Smithy...lollipop?

Rhian: I bet you cannot give me three reasons why it is the best lolly ever?

Rachel: Yes I can, I SAY YES I CAN! Number one the lolly will not stick to the wrapper, number two this lolly does not drip, so no more sticky fingers and finally the lolly is a scrummy-yummy, mouth-watering, delicious, gorgeous, lip-smacking, scrumptious, Smithy...lollipop.

Rhian: I still don't get you.

Rachel: Well it is a scrummy-yummy, mouth-watering, delicious, gorgeous, lip-smacking and scrumptious, Smithy...lollipop.

Rhian: Well now I get it! How much are they?

Rachel: Only £2 for 10 lollipops.

Rhian: I will get two packets now. I will get a scrummy-yummy, mouth-watering, delicious, gorgeous, lip-smacking and scrumptious, Smithy...lollipop.

Both: Remember Oak Tree get your scrummy-yummy, mouth-watering, delicious, gorgeous, lip-smacking and scrumptious, Smithy...lollipop! Available from your local ice-cream van.



Secondly Chloe and Kate will try to persuade you to get their imaginary ToyTurner.

2) ToyTurner

Chloe: Hey what's that?

Kate: It's a ToyTurner!

Chloe: What is a ToyTurner?

Kate: Well I am glad you asked. It is a magnificent toy that allows you to travel to the past and then back to the future!

Chloe: (confused) Where on Earth did you get it from?

Kate: Well this is a very rare opportunity, in fact a once in a lifetime opportunity for children at Oak Tree Primary School to make history come alive. With this toy you can go back and see dinosaurs with your own eyes or visit the future and see robot teachers!

Chloe: What do the children at Oak Tree have to do to get hold of a ToyTurner?

Kate: Well they have to be very good at history so they don't end up in trouble when they go back in time AND they need to be good at Numeracy so they can calculate how many years they need to travel back and forward. Finally they need to be good at science so they can work the ToyTurner.

Chloe: Well I wonder if any of the children at Oak Tree are good enough to own such a toy?

Kate: Well if they are, they will know how to obtain this toy?

Both: The ToyTurner making lessons more fun!

Thirdly Taurean and Samantha will talk about their imaginary magical pen.

3) Magical Pen

Taurean: Hello Oak Tree, are you bored of writing with the same old school pen or pencil? Are you fed up with your teacher telling you to re-write things because she thinks it is not neat enough? I thought you would say yes. Well give this a try.

Samantha: This is a magical pen, which will put a smile on your face even in your most boring lesson.

Taurean: This magical pen is guaranteed to leave your teacher Miss. Davies gob-smacked!

Samantha: This pen will change the way your exercise books look forever. The pen not only makes you write neatly it also makes sure your spellings are correct, no matter what language you write in.

Taurean: The pen also has an in-built heater so you can write even in the coldest classroom. The pen also has a MP3 player so you can download and listen to your favourite tunes in class, be careful that your teacher does not catch you. Finally the pen writes in over a thousand different colours, no more boring black and blue writing.

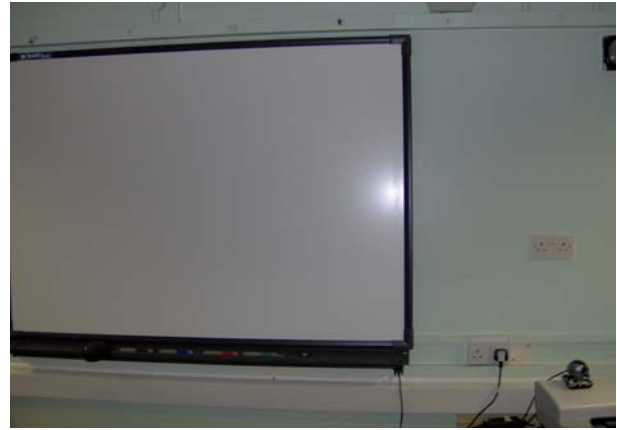
Both: Get your pen, by contacting us at school. If you buy this pen now; priced at only £4.99 you can BOGOF, Yes buy one get one free!



DVD Video ✓

See DVD

Digital Photographs ✓



USE OF THE PERSONAL PORTAL DESKTOP - MYCLASSES FACILITY:

How was this Facility used as part of the Project?

Used to access E164 number.

Any Issues/Problems with this Aspect of the Project:

N/A.

If you didn't use the facility please say why:

N/A.



OVERALL CONCLUSIONS FROM THE PROJECT SO FAR:

Positives: Enthusiasm displayed by pupils. Ease of use once set up.

Negatives: Initial set up, problem with firewall.

What would you do differently if starting the project now?

Use a method to amplify voices of partner school children (comment from St. Aidan's).

Reactions of those involved locally and remotely:

Staff: Year 6 teacher keen to use VC as part of her transition work with Key Stage 3.

Pupils:

"I think Video Conferencing is great fun and I like it when we get to talk to different schools from other places".
Taurean, aged 10

"I like Video Conferencing because you get to talk to other schools and to know other schools".
Chloe, aged 10

"I like Video Conferencing because you can interact with children at any time of the day or any place".
Rachel, aged 9

"I think Video Conferencing is a new opportunity to get to know other schools and other people. The technology is very advanced".
Michael, aged 10

Parents: N/A.

Governors: Chair of Governors impressed at low cost of VC and ease of use. Different from VC he used in industry.

Others: N/A.



FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS:

Where do you see your VC activity going in the future?

Short Term? More VC's with Oak Tree Primary re: Poetry Conversations. VC with Saltburn Primary re: contrast between localities. VC's regarding transition.

Long Term? VC's linking to Modern Foreign Languages in particular French.

Useful Links:

N/A.