



Ealing Case Study: ICT in the Foundation Stage 'Listening to Young Children' (Visit #1)

Context/Rationale:

Our 2005 Early Years conference on 'Listening to Young Children' was delivered by Penny Lancaster from The Coram Family. The impact of participation in the conference is being supported through this new follow up project focused on empowering practitioners to use ICT as a 'listening tool' in the Foundation Stage.

Listening to Young Children is centred on the belief that children have the right to a voice, and that their 'voice' is valued. By listening to the thoughts, ideas and contributions of children we can help them to achieve their full potential by valuing their participation in matters that affect their lives. Technology has an exciting part to play in giving a multimodal communication tool to children. Beliefs, interests, and ideas can be expressed and shared through visual, sound and video mediums.

Notes on the context of the Case Study:

- The case studies have been collected in the first visit to settings two weeks after the training.
- This captures the beginning stages of reflective practice in the area of Listening to Young Children.
- These case studies will be revisited in the second visit to settings to gather evidence of further reflection.
- These case studies were completed by the practitioners from the settings and collated by the project trainers Ellie Hagreen and Ruth Irvine.

Setting Name: Perivale Primary School Nursery and Reception Classes

Both the Nursery and Reception teachers were able to attend the initial training and both were already quite happy with their ICT competence, and have been using digital cameras themselves in the classroom.

Both teachers had decided to focus on the outdoor area, which was already an area of priority. The Reception teacher had narrowed this down to her outside role play, which had been a 'Wendy house' that was then changed into a 'real fruit shop'.



Process:

The Nursery teacher had spoken to the children mostly on a 1:1 basis about the outdoor area, and what they would like to see. She commented that most of the children's ideas were based on what they had already experienced out there. I suggested that she could broaden the discussion to other outdoor areas that the children have experience of, for example, the park or their own gardens. Some children had painted pictures of what they wanted outside.

Photo #1 This child would like flowers in the garden

The Nursery teacher had introduced the cameras but only with adult supervision. She said that a percentage of the children had had a turn, but not yet all of them. She was concerned that supervising the camera took her away from joining in with the children's spontaneous play. There was some apprehension about letting the children use them unsupervised, although the teacher



Ealing Case Study: ICT in the Foundation Stage 'Listening to Young Children' (Visit #1)

said that she would start the process with the afternoon group. In fact, while I was visiting the Reception class, the teacher left the camera out for the children, and when I saw her later, she said that to her surprise they had used it well. We discussed how letting the children be independent with the camera would free her up to take part in other activities. The Reception teacher said that the children were "responsible with the cameras." They had had an initial discussion on how to care for them. They had been teaching each other, for example pointing out if the camera was upside down. Some were able to review their photos and were beginning to zoom in and out. The children have to come and ask to use the camera.

The Nursery children had used the camera with the teacher to take photos of things they already liked outside.

The Reception children had started by taking photos of what they liked outside as well. Very few had included play inside the Wendy house, which had sparked the teacher's decision to replace it with a shop.

Practices:

The Nursery teacher said she had a degree of flexibility in her planning and told me how only that morning, two children had said they wanted a police station, so she was considering a project on People Who Help Us for the next term. She obviously already used elements of the Listening approach, and we talked about perhaps writing down some of what the children said, so she had a record.



Both teachers commented on a developing continuum of ICT skills for children. The Nursery teacher described how she had moved the ICT provision on during the year to children selecting their own software for the computer. The Reception teacher commented how this was exactly the right time of year for the children to be using the camera independently, as they were mature enough to do so.

Possibilities:

The Nursery teacher identified next steps as giving the children old cameras to explore, and perhaps allowing them more independent access to the digital cameras. She wanted to make some decisions on what changes they should make to the Nursery garden, as well as talking about the children's own gardens. The Reception teacher planned to continue the project over the next week by asking the children to take photos outside again, to see if the fruit shop features. She also planned to allow independent access to the cameras.

