

Dissolving Boundaries

through Technology in Education

Yearbook 2012-2013

Teachers' Evaluations & Reflections



Parkhall Primary School, Antrim & Presentation Senior National School, Mullingar

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| Teachers: | Stephen Bailie (NI) & Niamh O'Neill (RoI) |
| Age Group: | 9-11 |
| Project Name: | Homes through the Ages |
| Curricular areas: | History/Geography/English/Art/ ICT |
| ICT Tools: | Wikis, forums, chat, database, word processing, PowerPoint, Elluminate, digital camera, video camera, microphone, voice recorder, video editing, photo editing software |

Project overview

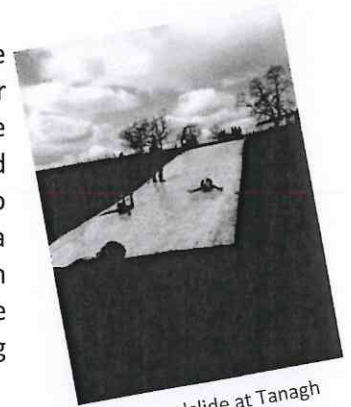
The topic we chose for our project was 'Homes through the Ages'.

Our first aim was that the children in both schools would get to know each other and develop an awareness and understanding of the differences and similarities between the two schools. We did this by introducing ourselves via the forums. Each pupil filled in their own profiles online. Once we had all been introduced the groups started to email each other fortnightly. Each group chose a type of home that they would investigate. We developed a timeline of homes from this. The groups researched, did projects on and built a model of their type of home and shared it with the other half of their group. They asked each other questions and learned from the work their partners had completed. It was a wonderful opportunity for the children to teach and learn from each other via videoconference.

Face-to-face meeting

Venue: Tanagh Outdoor Education Centre

We held our face-to-face meeting on Tuesday, April 30th. We chose the venue based on location and the activities offered. Tanagh was a 2 hour drive from both schools. We met and had a snack after the journey. The pupils were divided into their Dissolving Boundaries groups. They had been working with these groups all year so they were very excited to get to meet them in person. The groups did paired orienteering with a team mate from the other school. Canoeing was next and the children sang songs as they rowed 'merrily down the stream!' The activity the children enjoyed most was the mud slide. They had great fun sliding down in their wet suits and they genuinely didn't want the day to end.



The mudslide at Tanagh
OEC

Videoconferencing

We used video -conferencing about once a month. Initially the groups introduced themselves to each other as part of a whole class broadcast. As we completed our projects the individual groups were able to show each other their work and ask each other questions about their work. Our school were very lucky to be chosen to take part in Dissolving Boundaries day in Dundalk IT. We used videoconferencing to practise our presentation together for the day.



Group videoconferencing

During their DB project pupils learned

The project involved a huge amount of learning for every pupil including:

- ICT skills- uploading photos, researching online, PowerPoint, creating profiles, posting on a forum, design wiki pages, including hyperlinks,
- Oral language- videoconferencing, turn taking, questioning, voice projection, clarity
- Team work- friendships, in groups, at face-to-face,
- Knowledge of the different types of dwellings and homes through history and reasons for the differences.

What did teachers gain from DB?

Our schools have been paired for the last two years but both schools decided to give another teacher an opportunity to join the project this year. We felt it was very worthwhile keeping the school pairing as it worked so well in the past. I was delighted to join the project as we had heard wonderful feedback from last year's teacher. I feel it was a wonderful learning experience for myself to work with a teacher and class from Northern Ireland.

What activities did you do on DB Day?

We were lucky to be invited to Dundalk IT to participate in the DB day live broadcast. Three pupils from each school were chosen to present a synopsis of our collaborative project during the year. We prepared a PowerPoint and video of our experiences. We had a wonderful day and would highly recommend taking part in the presentation to other schools. The children back in the classroom were able to log on to the website to see the presentation and could submit questions which were asked during the live interviews. Our principal came with us on the day and was very impressed with all of the work .

Pupils' Feedback

Our pupils loved Dissolving Boundaries. I was constantly reminded when it was our day on the laptops and the children enjoyed working with each other immensely.

'I loved meeting new friends'

'We loved working with the other groups. We found out differences and similarities about us and discovered we have more similarities'

'Because of Dissolving Boundaries, even though we are far away we still get to chat and be friends'

'We really enjoyed meeting our partners on the face-to-face day and working as a team with them'

'I knew my group straight away when I saw them on the face-to-face because I had spoken to them on the videoconference'

'I loved doing Dissolving Boundaries every week. It was exciting to hear what the other school was doing and to tell them our news'.



Busy making models of homes

What would you change about your DB experience?

We really enjoyed our experience this year and are looking forward to taking part again next year.

What advice would you give to teachers thinking of leading a DB project?

I would advise any teacher to go ahead with the project. There is wonderful support available from all of the DB team so there is no need to worry about the ICT side of things. The project is well organised and coordinated. I think it is a good idea to choose a topic that will link in with both of your curriculum plans for the year.