

Mr Gove doesn't visit the same schools as me

I listened with mounting disbelief last week at BETT as Michael Gove, Secretary Of State for Education, revealed his total ignorance of what happens in schools today. Watch the whole of his speech [here](#)



Michael Gove

He said, "The fundamental model of school education is still a teacher talking to a group of pupils. It has barely changed over the centuries, even since Plato established the earliest "akademia" in a shady olive grove in ancient Athens.

A Victorian schoolteacher could enter a 21st century classroom and feel completely at home. Whiteboards may have eliminated chalk dust, chairs may have migrated from rows to groups, but a teacher still stands in front of the class, talking, testing and questioning."

Maybe that's what they do at Eton. I don't know. I don't go there. But hang on a moment. Hasn't he been visiting academies and free schools lately? Maybe that's where he saw these antiquated methods.

This week I have interviewed a primary teacher about using Skype, a secondary teacher about putting videos on a learning platform so they can be seen on the other side of the world. Meanwhile in Sidcup pupils at Burnt Oak School are working in groups using MissionMaker from [Immersive Education](#) to create games and learning how to include triggers that make things happen on screen.

I know that the teachers I talked to for my new book Brilliant

Ideas for using ICT in the Inclusive Classroom don't stand in front of a class and talk. They have too much of a sense of survival. They would be slaughtered.

Mr Gove, you need to get out more.

Brilliant Ideas for using ICT in the Inclusive Classroom by Sal McKeown and Angie McGlashon is now available from the www.routledge.com/education site

Swansong for BETT at Olympia

Next week marks the last BETT at Olympia. I have been doing BETT for so many years that I can remember when it was at the Barbican!

Last year marked a downturn in the fortunes of so many companies, especially small businesses providing for low incidence special needs. Inclusive Technology has just published their accounts for last year showing a fall in profits and the loss of 8 members of staff. For the first time in many years, they are not running the Special Needs Fringe at the Hilton.

There is still plenty for Sencos and other special needs staff to look at but be warned – you will have to be prepared to walk as it is so spread out.



Odd from Oddizzi

For primary and early years have a look at two new subscription based resources. Oddizzi from Little Travel Bug is on stand P47. It lets children learn about the world and

visit far flung places from the comfort and safety of their own classroom. Two little globe trotting characters, Odd and Izzi, introduce children to different countries with extra information being provided by teachers and travel writers. Best of all, it promotes links between classrooms across the world so children get the inside story about how people live in other countries.

Q&D (B39) is launching a new version of their busythings.co.uk online subscription service for early years and SEN children. This is a words-free version which has icons and pictures and has been designed for use by children all over the world. For children who are learning English, try Langeroo, (SW68), an interactive programme with activities and games to help children learn vocabulary and construct sentences.



Any place, any
time audio

One of my favourite products is returning to BETT this year. Storyphones (V35) an MP3 digital audio system in a robust and colourful headset is a great way of ensuring Anywhere Anytime audio. They have story books but also can be used for music and movement lessons, for teaching French and for working with young children who have language delay.

For older learners who need extra support with reading and writing have a look at ClaroRead for PC V6 (ClaroRead for Mac V5) on stand SN64. This software offers text-to-speech and scanning so any piece of writing can be turned into a file which can be edited or read aloud by a computer or other device. Rival company Texthelp (SN70) will be showing cloud based versions of old favourite Read&Write GOLD which can be used with iPad, iPod Touch, iPhone, as well as PCs and Macs.

Those about to start university may benefit from a new Higher Education dyslexia screening tool that Iansyst will be showing

on stand SN05. Also take a look at WordQ on SN13 which offers word prediction alongside any standard writing software. The company claim that it will only take 15 minutes to learn the ins and outs of this program and that it features, " a carefully thought-out design that aids literacy without getting in the way."

If you are looking for resources for children in special schools, have a look at the special needs zone where many of the more specialist companies congregate. nasen is running the information point on stand SN15 and can offer advice on what to see. Make sure you visit the Ablenet stand SN82 to see Ian Bean deliver his best practice sessions.

Finally do come to my seminar. Angie McGlashon and I are presenting Brilliant ideas to use ICT in the inclusive classroom at 1.30 on Wednesday 11th January SEN Theatre, in the West Hall. This is full of practical advice and case studies from schools which are making great use of technology.

And the winner is **...Proloquo2go**



Sal and comedian Alun
Cochrane meet the winners
from Proloquo2go

Rebecca Bright is a Speech and Language therapist and has been closely involved with Proloquo2go so she was delighted to learn that it had won the BETT Special Needs Award 2011. It is an app which can be used on an iPad or iPhone to give a voice

to those who have a disability such as cerebral palsy or autism which prevents them getting their message across.

Proloquo2go is an affordable solution for those who need communication aids. There are many specialist augmentative and assistive communication (AAC) devices on the market but they often cost thousands of pounds and demand outstrips supply so some young people are left literally without a voice. Now, with increased funding restrictions, there are more people who need a reasonably priced aid and Proloquo2go offers access to many people who would formerly have found AAC out of reach.



AAC in your
pocket

“Proloquo2go is also very socially acceptable,” said Rebecca. “It works on devices which everyone else has or wants to have so it is not seen as a specialist device for people with disabilities This has had a knock on effect. In the past some learners were unwilling to use their communication aids outside the classroom or home because it marked them out as being different but now that stigma is removed. There are over 300,000 apps on iTunes and we are finding that users are going for a mix and match approach. They might use Proloquo2go symbols for a message and then switch into YouTube to show a video and then call up photos of their family as part of a conversation. All of us at [Proloquo2go](#), the developers [AssistiveWare](#) and those of us who work at the UK partner [TherapyBox](#) are delighted to win the award. It is good news for us but it is also good news for those who need communication aids. It shifts the spotlight from dedicated technology to low cost, mainstream mobile technology.

Watch a video to see how Proloquo2go changed one little boy's life.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ulf11Kg8-lI>