


All this and Jo Brand too

The BETT awards are almost upon us and I can nearly get into my posh frock to join the glitterati at a new venue, the Brewery at the Barbican. This year we are in for a real treat as the awards will be announced by Jo Brand. Even if your company doesn't win, you are assured of a good night out. I  have been looking down the list of finalists seeing who I would like to see win in some of the key categories. This is a purely subjective approach. I am not going to support anything which deals with assessment in any form as I now believe that this is just another way to cosh teachers, parents and children into submission and give them an inferiority complex.

There are many shortlisted products that I know and love. I am running two sessions on Audio Notetaker for dyslexia learners on the Sonocent stand C470 on Thursday at 1.30 and Friday at 2pm and they are on the list for the ICT Tools for Learning and Teaching section. I am of course familiar with all the products in the special needs category and I am delighted to see other old friends such as 2Simple, Twig's TigTag, TextHelp and the Yes Programme.

But there are many products which I am less familiar with. Here is my top ten to look out for:

1. For early years one good choice would be Rising Stars Switched on ICT, a step by step approach to get young children using ICT in meaningful ways. I like Rising Stars and have written about some of their other products especially their e books.

2. I like the look of TTS Group's Mini Mobile Phones: 'Children will delight in developing their language using this set of 6 realistic mobile phones. Colour co-ordinated buttons make for easy use.' This will at least stop children using their parents' boring old iPhones. They have also been shortlisted for:

3. The NEW Ultimate Timer, a rechargeable stopwatch with a

simple to use, lapsed time function. Anything which saves looking for batteries will be welcome in the classroom.

4. For primary I am going to opt for 3P Learning Reading Eggs a library with over 1,500 eBooks, for specific year groups, as an intervention/catch up tool and to support EAL and SEN requirements

5. Another good choice is Espresso Education – Espresso Coding that teaches students to code and make their own apps to share with their friends and parents. This will help children develop skills for their future working life which so much of the National Curriculum singularly fails to do.

6. For secondary I am going for English and Media Centre's Arctic Adventure which works on ipads and has authentic video material, images and blogs from the Catlin Arctic Survey.

7. For ICT Tools for Teaching and Learning I like the idea of IGGY ,an online educational and social network for gifted 13-18 year olds from across the world with content for maths, science, history, politics, creative writing and life skills, and a safe environment for students to exchange ideas, debate and learn.



8. It's a pity FlashSticks won't be at BETT because the product looks excellent. It combines low tech post-it notes, foreign language vocabulary and smartphones. The notes are colour coded to help

with gender recall (blue notes for masculine words, pink notes for feminine words) and a Free App channel means users can wave their smartphone or tablet over any note to call up a quick pronunciation video.

9. Visual Education's Wordwall lets teachers make easy learning activities for interactive whiteboards. Apparently you pick a template, type in your content and with a few clicks you're done. Alternatively pinch some ideas from their online community.

10. Finally I am on the look out for good maths resources this

year so I am hoping that Jumpido will do the trick. It is billed as: 'an exciting series of educational games for primary school. It combines natural body exercises with engaging math problems to make learning a truly enjoyable experience.'

If your product is in the running for an award, good luck. If not, then just enjoy the entertainment. I am sure Jo Brand will be very good value.