

Simple technology makes maths more fun for bright students

Former investment banker turned teacher Narsh Srikanthapalan has been teaching gifted and talented pupils at Caludon Castle School in Coventry. He still spends a lot of time on spreadsheets but he also exploits all the facilities of interactive whiteboard software too, "We have Promethean interactive whiteboards and I like using the ActivInspire software. I probably use this more than other staff in the school."



Maths at Caludon
Castle School

For a lesson on rotation he took the theme of Caludon Castle and the pupils made a drawbridge over a moat. They played with rotation and came to realise that if you put the centre of rotation in the wrong place, the drawbridge doesn't just lift up, it twirls like a baton. So it was back to the drawing board and pupils had to find their own solutions.

Similarly he created a cops and robbers game, "I told them that I was PC Srikanthapalan and I was chasing a robber across a field. I had a green rectangle which represented the grass and as I started to 'follow' the robber the pupils realised that I could only move horizontally and vertically, not diagonally. The more able students started to ponder issues of programming here."

He believes that pupils prefer teachers to use interactive whiteboards as it improves the presentation of lessons. Resources can be prepared in advance, are clear and easy to read, can be edited and look professional. He finds that some members of the class will ask to come up to the board to show what they have done as they find it easier than using words to

explain concepts and methods. This means that more able pupils can share their knowledge and ideas with others in the class in a very immediate visual way.

He thinks one of the hooks for teachers is that technology improves classroom management. Interactive whiteboard software has virtual versions of the tools pupils are using, such as compasses and protractors so a teacher can demonstrate how to use these instead of showing each individual pupil. The whiteboard also means a teacher can keep eye contact with the class instead of turning away to write on a board. This year Caludon Castle has introduced a computerised random name generator to choose who will answer questions. It has been very effective for keeping pupils attentive. Since no one knows who will be chosen, it stops pupils drifting off. Now pupils only put their hand up if they want to ask a question.

4 Nations, 1 Challenge



Have you got at least 20 good mathematicians in your school? if so, you might like to have a go at The Four Nations Maths Challenge. This is the UK's biggest ever online maths event and runs from 8th -12th November as a prelude to the international World Maths Day.

There are two parts to the contest: Live Mathletics, a competitive 60 second mental arithmetic challenge and Curriculum Mathletics which has questions allied to concepts and topics from the UK curriculum.

The contest is run via 3P Learning's award winning learning platform Mathletics and is open to pupils of all ages and

stages of maths learning. With trophies, medals and certificates this is turning into a sporting tournament and who knows, come 2012 we might have a Maths Olympics too!

To get the whole story go to: <http://www.fournationsmathschallenge.co.uk/>

Magic Moments in the Maths Classroom



If you want to get pupils interested in maths, your interactive whiteboard is one way of bringing a little magic into the classroom. And how about using Magic Squares? This handy example is from Matthew Reames, a teacher at St Edmunds in Canterbury. He has developed an Excel workbook with a host of different magic square examples. He has used a blank magic square with numbers 1-9. This encourages lots of predictions and questions and gets pupils thinking about why numbers need to be in certain positions. Here is a simple example. Copy it into an Excel file and have a go. Good Luck!