Sandbox Advice

I think if I was going to advise anyone to use Sandbox AR, I would say first and foremost, don't be frightened. I would say it's one of the most straightforward and easy to use apps that I've ever come across. I've experienced lots of different AR apps and this one literally comes straight out the box, ready to use. The features are really accessible and you'll be up and running it with no time. I'd also not be afraid of really thinking outside the box. It's very open ended in what you can do with it and you are able to really look at something, go away and come back and really expand upon the experiences that you're creating. And I think when you combine other elements of hardware with it, you can get a real sense of immersion.

So the advice we would give anybody started to use Sandbox is the advice we give anybody using any piece of technology. You need time to play. You have to give your staff the chance to be able to explore the app, discuss what's possible and see how they might think it will fit into their teaching and learning. And then when you give it to the children, you need the same opportunity. They need the chance to explore the app as well. It's not about producing polished content. It's not about producing resources that are really time consuming. It's about thinking what is possible with this piece of technology and how can it really be embedded in what we do in the classroom.

Have a look at the software yourself. And maybe just get a small focus group and have a short period of just kind of free play where the children explore and through the children's exploration, you get to explore as well. I think it's very important to also have a focus. So if you are getting the children to use this software, maybe in the lesson, have prompt questions, have a clear aim of what you want to get out of the software. Some children may just find that they end up playing, whereas actually, if you focus their learning, they will be thoroughly enjoying the learning, but they can get a lot from it as well.

Questions that some of the teachers might be having is that actually, can my school afford this? And this is where the beauty of Sandbox comes in, because you don't have to invest into anything extra. All you need is an iPad that's working, you need the children to create the worlds, or you can take some of the pre-made worlds and it takes absolutely no time in making it, I thought it's going to take me so long in doing it, but it doesn't and you can just get going.

I would have a very clear learning intention, I would have very clear success criteria for the children and I would have a very clear image in my mind of what I want the outcome to be. And I think the more that you use the software, probably your own expectations will get higher and higher and higher of what you can get from the software. I think it's important just to make sure that the children have a clear focus while they are using the software. And there's so much on there, there is a possibility that some children might get a little bit lost because there's too much to do. So if you've got a very clear focus and you can set some very clear expectations: what you want the outcome to be and what you want the children's outcome to be, I think it could be really successful. I think I personally would use it either at the beginning of a history unit to excite the children and get them engaged, or you could use it throughout, or it could again be a nice way to do a little bit of assessment towards the end of a unit. For example, in Maya Temple, you could get the children to discuss what they would include in there, why they're including

certain things, why they chosen to put things in certain places. And I think just through the children's discussion, through using the software, you would definitely get a great level of assessment.

My advice to teachers would be to be brave. Give your children the space to be brave with the technology. We need to have parameters around what we want to achieve, but we also need to explore and dig into what the software can do. And I think be prepared to be surprised at what we can do when we're being creative. So my advice would be be ambitious, be brave, be open minded about how you use the software. The children are going to take this to places that you haven't imagined.