

Teaching matters

Articles and opinions on primary teaching, with tips and ideas for the classroom

'Catching ourselves being good'

Formative assessment using ICT

Assessment is the process of generating, gathering, recording, interpreting, using and reporting evidence of learning in individuals, groups or systems. Educational assessment provides information about progress in learning, and achievement in developing skills, knowledge, behaviours and attitudes. NCCA, 2015.

As part of our daily routine, we observe and listen as tasks are carried out in our classes. We ask clarifying questions and consider responses. We also consider the questions our pupils ask us as they look to us for guidance and assistance. We give affirmation when we 'catch them being good'.

Assessment is formative when ... used to adapt teaching to meet student needs. The process permits teachers and students to collect information about student progress, and to suggest adjustments to the teacher's approach to instruction and the student's approach to learning. Assessment for learning covers all aspects of formative assessment but has a particular focus on the students having an active role in his/her learning. NCCA, 2015.

If we are to empower pupils to have an active role in their learning, how might ICT support both the teacher and pupil? Do children have opportunities to use technology wherever they need to record evidence of learning? This learning can take place in any location. Proliferation in the use of variants of more mobile devices like digital cameras, multimedia games devices, smartphones, tablet devices as well as PC's/Laptops open up possibilities for children to 'record themselves being good' to make learning more visible and audible.

Digital images (still)

It is possible to capture still images using a multitude of devices. A child with a digital folder containing images of something they found interesting they captured every day would have a rich timeline of evidence



of learning. Annotating these images with comments would provide even more evidence of learning. This can be done with apps like Skitch as in illustration above.

Taking screenshots

Children can spend time using technology as part of their learning, but not all applications have a 'save' function, especially at stages other than the final product/result. A screenshot will capture a still image of whatever is happening on screen. To take a screenshot:

- iOS (Home + Sleep)
- Mac (Command + Shift + 3)
- Chromebook (Control + Window Switcher)
- Android (Volume Down + Power for 2 seconds)
- Windows (PrntScren and then Ctrl + V (paste)).

Video images

Capturing video images provides visual context and sound to evidence of learning with pupil feedback like "I chose to video this problem as I could not work it out and these were the attempts I made."

There is now evidence of the work the child was doing as well as a basis for the teacher to give constructive feedback. Even with the still, screenshot and example video mentioned it is easier to see how formative assessment can take place and ongoing feedback can be sought and responded to.

Screencasting and presentations

Screencasting is the process of recording

what is happening on a screen with audio narration to make a video file. There are a variety of applications that allow you arrange still images, screenshots, videos and add a voiceover (Explain Everything, iMovie, Windows Movie Maker and a variety of presentation applications can all do this to varying degrees). Annotations, animations and diagrams can also be included to further express the learning process. A screencast/



"I was able to complete this online quiz using my 24 hour chart and then without using it"

presentation need only be a minute long. A collection of ten of these per pupil or class group over the course of a year will give a rich picture.

Creating an environment to make this happen

With time, students assume responsibility for capturing images/screenshots/videos of their learning. The teacher cannot do everything. There can be a move away from giving feedback about 'the final product' as valuable feedback can be given and responded to well in advance of this. Managing files at individual and class level is very important as there is potential for a lot of material to be created. The availability of devices makes this process easier but potentially can be achieved using a single device managed well.

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