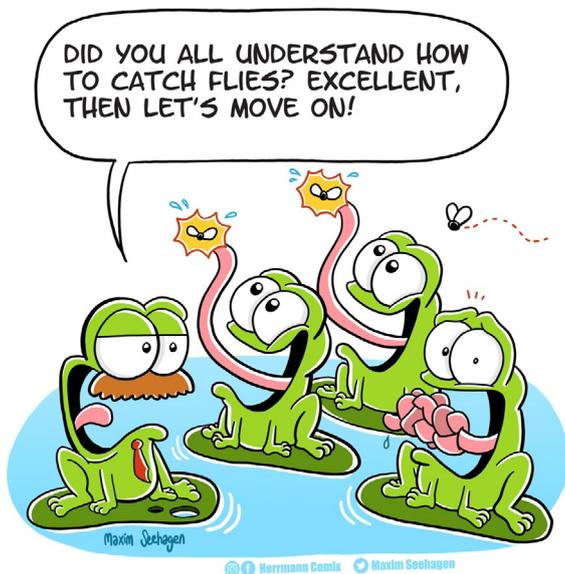


Empower students with **digital formative assessment**

- 4th Issue - May 2022-



How do teachers know what their students actually learn and who is in need of additional support? How can students become more empowered in their own learning? How can digital tools support student learning? And does COVID-19 change the way we think about these questions?

This newsletter aims to engage organisations working on assessment, as well as teachers, school heads, policy makers and anyone else who is interested in an exchange around these questions.

Can school be cool?

[Can learning and assessment be fun](#) (1 minute video)? Do tests help your students to learn? [Can school be cool](#) (1 minute video)? Let us know in [our short survey](#) what you think so that we can share some answers in the next issue!

Subscribe to our newsletter

Do you want to join us on our learning journey? [Just subscribe!](#) This newsletter is published twice a year until February 2023.



Combining summative and formative assessment for student success

“Formative assessment is any assessment that forms the direction of future learning.” Dylan Wiliam, Emeritus Professor of Educational Assessment – UCL Institute of Education, UK

[This video](#) - which is part of the Assess@Learning toolkit - highlights that combining summative and formative assessment is key for student success. Formative assessment makes learning visible so that teachers and students can learn from the process, while summative assessment usually takes place at the end of the process, according to Jaakko Vuorio, Finnish National Agency for Education.

For Dylan Wiliam ‘*formative*’ and ‘*summative*’ are descriptions of the uses that we make of assessment evidence. Any assessment result can in principle be used formatively or summatively, as he explains in the same video. He provides the example of a child to be tested on their knowledge of number facts from 1x1 to 10x10 and their score to be 15 out of 20. A summative conclusion would be that the child knows about 75% of the number facts. If the teacher noticed that the child has difficulties with the seven times table, that would be a formative conclusion.

How to include students and parents in a schools' feedback culture?

In our [last issue](#) we heard from school head Marc van Dongen and teacher and team leader Florian Allaart how they promote a feedback culture at their [Augustinianum school](#). Teachers who may not be at ease with receiving feedback may ask their students questions like 'Do you agree that this was a good lesson?'. Training can help teachers to learn how to give and receive feedback how to give more responsibility to students by giving them choices. Teachers can ask their students for example: 'What is the thing you still remember tomorrow when you think about this lesson?' or 'Can you give me one advice to improve my next lesson?' Working more autonomously with learning goals is not always easy for students. Students themselves asked for this process towards more autonomy to be planned in small steps.



The school provides students, teachers, and parents with several opportunities each year to provide feedback. In 'student arenas' students sit in the middle and one teacher is asking them questions, while other teachers sit on the side and listen. The aim is for

students to speak their minds and teachers to listen and learn from it. The school also uses feedback forms to collect opinions from students and parents and engages in casual conversations to hear about their views.

The Assess@Learning toolkit also provides guidance on how to give and provide feedback that helps students progress. In [this video](#), Dylan Wiliam, Emeritus Professor of Educational Assessment, University College UK, highlights that teachers need to spend some time to prepare students for feedback. Students need to understand how feedback will save them time and help them to learn better. He advises to always give students time to react to feedback in class. If students do not understand the aim of feedback, they can take it personally and get angry, as Slovakian teacher trainer Kornélia Lohyňová explains in the same video.



Country focus – digital formative assessment in Portugal

In 2018/2019, Portugal underwent a process of curriculum redesign which is reflected in the new legislation and [curriculum reference documents](#), notably the Decree-Law no. 55/2018. This Decree is a major change in education including a shift in focus from summative to formative assessment. This legislation focuses on assessment aiming to inform and improve pedagogy and teaching and learning. It highlights the need for teachers to use a variety of assessment procedures, techniques, and tools that are fit for purpose.

The [MAIA project](#) that started in 2019/2020 supported this shift towards formative assessment. The project has a specific focus on formative assessment and aims to improve the assessment of student learning in the classroom. It targets mainstream courses and vocational courses from primary to upper secondary level. The project organizes classroom assessment workshops where students experiment with different formative assessment tools and practices. Representatives of teacher training centers at school level build teacher capacity so that every teacher can apply these tools and practices with their students. A core team consisting of delegates from the DGE/Ministry of Education, a higher education institution and school clusters/schools across mainland Portugal monitor this project.

As part of the [Action Plan for the Digital Transition](#), digital training for teachers, school digital development and digital educational resources are being prepared and integrated in the national program. In this program, teachers are placed in different trainings and workshops according to their level of competencies. Moreover, digital ambassadors provide support to teachers at school level.

3 questions about Assess@Learning project

Interview with Katja Engelhardt

Are you also a professional working on the topics of formative and digital assessment and would like to appear here? [Just let us know!](#)

1. Who is behind the Assess@Learning project?

Assess@Learning is the largest European policy experimentation ever launched for digital formative assessment. The project is coordinated by [European Schoolnet](#). We work together with three research institutes and universities, namely the [Bruno-Kessler Foundation \(FBK-IRVAPP\)](#), the [University of Glasgow](#) and the [The Queen's University of Belfast](#). We also work with five public authorities in Estonia, Finland, Greece, Spain and Portugal, namely the [Education and Youth Board \(HARNO\)](#), the [Finnish National Agency of Education \(Opetushallitus\)](#), the [Computer Technology Institute and Press "Diophantus"](#), the [Ministry of Education and Vocational Education and Training](#) and the [Ministry of Education and Science \(DGE\)](#). The project started in 2019 and will end in February 2023. It is co-funded by the Erasmus+ program.

2. Why did Assess@Learning partners initiate the project?

The project addresses the need of policy makers to support and rigorously test digital formative assessment. Research indicates that digital formative assessment (DFA) has great potential to provide a bridge between learning and assessment and thereby support more powerful student learning. It seems to be the case that DFA is currently not widespread in schools in Europe but conclusive evidence on this question is missing. Classroom studies found that, when effectively used, formative assessment in ICT-based environments may have a significant impact on student achievement (e.g. [Bhagat & Spector, 2017](#); [Faber, Luyten & Visscher, 2017](#); [Wall et al. 2006](#)). Our [perspective paper](#) also provides an interesting summary on the topic.

3. What will be the outcomes of the project?

The project developed an online toolkit to guide teachers, school heads, students, parents, and policy makers in adopting DFA practices and bring system-level impact. The toolkit presents relevant content in an easy and appealing way for those stakeholders. This content includes videos, cartoons, infographics as well as teaching scenarios for teachers and case studies for school heads and policy makers. The toolkit was tested in randomized controlled trials from March 2021 until June 2022 with 208 schools in Estonia, Finland, Greece, Spain, and Portugal. We will present the results of the field trials during our online conference in February 2023, which all readers of this newsletter will be most welcome to join! We will provide information about the conference on our [Assess@Learning website](#). The toolkit will be freely available to anyone as of early 2023.



Katja Engelhardt works as Senior Education Analyst at [European Schoolnet](#). She co-developed the Assess@Learning toolkit and is responsible for the research aspects of the Assess@Learning project.

About our newsletter

We aim to provide you with new evidence on student learning and assessment with digital tools in an easy and engaging way. We warmly invite all newsletter readers to **contribute with their own views and questions to the newsletter** – it does not matter if you are an expert or novice to the topic!

Does this sound ambitious to you? Do you have a particular question that you would like us to address? Provide us with your [anonymous feedback](#) on our newsletter and let us know what you still would like to improve.

In our next issue, we will:

- present our brand-new Assess@Learning **toolkit**
- first **Assess@Learning project results**: Find out if a toolkit can foster school's uptake of digital formative assessment!
- put our **country focus on Estonia**

About the Assess@Learning project

Do you want to find out more about the project? Check out our [website](#).



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